



Working Group Update on Employee Engagement

November 19, 2014

A joint effort between the CHCO Council and the National Council on
Federal Labor-Management Relations

Employee Engagement Working Group

- After the release of the 2013 EVS, the CHCO Council and National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations both considered Employee Engagement a top priority.
- The Working Group formed in early 2014 and includes members from 15 agencies and 8 non-government organizations, including NFFE, IFPTE, AFGE, Teamsters, NAGE, Laborers, SEA and FMA.
- Joint co-chair structure (labor and management) for full group and 3 sub-groups
- Volunteers sharing “unofficial wisdom” to diverse Federal audience: strategists, supervisors, employees, etc.

Engagement Groups: Activities/Products

HOW to
apply

Group 1: Promising Practices

- Informed by Group 3, identify promising engagement practices across Federal and non-Federal sites through literature reviews, site visits, etc.
- Develop an effective template to communicate successful engagement practices – context for success, challenges, applied solution, and result.

WHY this
outcome

Group 2: Barriers and Enablers

- Design a process for site leadership and/or stakeholders to analyze the workplace climate (barriers, enablers) and strengthen site engagement.

WHERE
to look

Group 3: Measures and Incentives

- Analyze data to help identify FEVS questions and associated behaviors that have the greatest impact on improving engagement.
- Identify Federal worksites with potential for site visits and further barrier/enabler analysis.
- Review existing incentives for engagement and propose enhancements.

Employee Engagement Defined

CHCO-LMC Working Group Definition of Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a multi-faceted construct consisting of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components which are distinct from job satisfaction.

Employee engagement is characterized by an employee's passion and commitment to their work and organization. An employee who feels engaged in their workplace has greater willingness to put forth extra effort, to take risks, and to behave in ways that benefit themselves, their coworkers, and their organization.

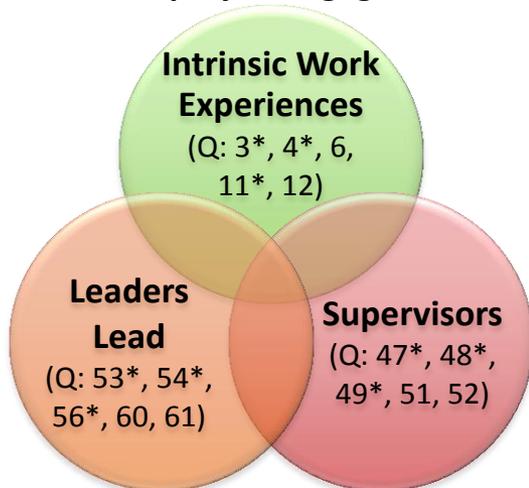
NOTE: OPM recently defined employee engagement as the sense of purpose that is evident in an employee's display of dedication, persistence and effort or the overall attachment the employee has to their organization and its mission. (OPM Strategic Goal #6)

Employee Engagement Measured

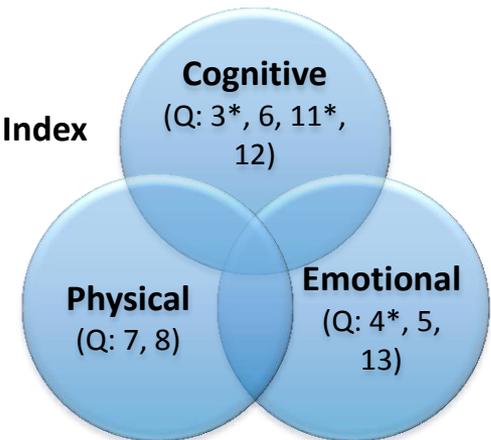
There are *multiple ways* to effectively measure Employee Engagement (EE).

- A 'good' measure has variability in responses, shares distinct relationships with some measures and not others, and can be translated into actionable qualities.
 - *Example FEVS EE Index items: 3, 4, 11, 47, 48, 49, 53, 54, 56*
- FEVS items can be assessed in multiple ways to provide new insight and 'deeper dive' action planning on employee engagement.

FEVS Employee Engagement Index



Alternate Employee Engagement Index (being explored by VA)

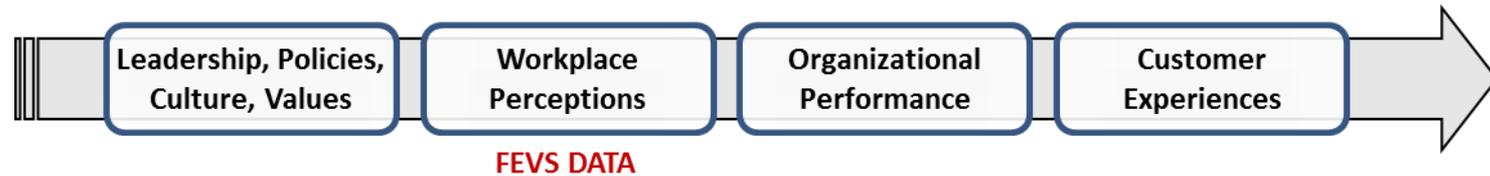


Joint Engagement Index (alternate application used by NSF)

(Q: 2*, 3*, 6, 12, 20*, 26*, 30*, 34*, 41*, 44*, 45*, 46*, 48*, 49*, 59*, 60, 61, 63, 64, 65*)

Why Employee Engagement Matters

Employee Engagement → Organizational Outcomes



Employee workplace data (e.g., FEVS: engagement) provide one part of the 'big picture' in how shared work/service environments can create 'spillover effects' from one group to another: *Leadership → Workplace → Customer*

The workforce literature finds greater employee engagement...

- *Improves employee productivity and customer service*
- *Reduces turnover and workplace accidents*
- *Increases profitability in the private sector*

FEVS workplace data can inform areas for action planning in this causal chain.

Employee Engagement: Workplace Culture

Key Qualities of Organizational Culture Promoting Employee Engagement:

- (1) Clear organizational values about the agency's mission and workplace culture,
- (2) Leadership who set tone and expectations to implement and support employee engagement,
- (3) Investment in frontline managers to strengthen supervisory skills, and
- (4) Investment in employees, including training, career maps, and input into work processes and innovations.



Context: Internal Engagement Barriers

Culture Change Requires Time

The research literature is clear – changing culture requires time and support (across all organizational levels). Key factors include:

- Communication– Employees and unions often feel out of the loop, and in a bad culture, they assume the worst
- Collaboration– Some management teams are stuck in the past, but even when there is a desire to change, it takes a major time commitment to learn new ways of working together
- Coordination– Agencies looking for quick fixes change strategies too often or roll out numerous change programs without helping employees connect the dots

Context: External Engagement Barriers

Culture Change Requires Commitment

The last few years have seen major changes outside of the control of agency management and employees, such as:

- Mission– Budget uncertainty caused by sequestration and the 16-day shutdown affect morale and jeopardize mission accomplishment, which is vitally important to Federal employees
- Money– The 3-year pay freeze, changes to the pension program and rising costs for healthcare and higher education have eroded the purchasing power of Federal employees
- Messages– Most news about Federal employees is negative or unsympathetic– the Sammies Gala is a notable bright spot

Focus: Leading for Employee Engagement

Overall, the FEVS Employee Engagement Index fell from 64% in 2013 to 63% in 2014. Notably, the “Leaders Lead” sub-component fell from 53% in 2013 to 50% in 2014.

The work group has identified 3 FEVS questions most likely to help address this decline:

53. In my organization, leaders generate high levels of motivation and commitment in the workforce.

54. My organization's leaders maintain high standards of honesty and integrity.

56. Managers communicate the goals and priorities of the organization.

Re-Focus: Engaging Communication

Effective Communication is Critical to Improving Employee Engagement.

How can leaders effectively communicate to generate high levels of motivation and commitment in the workforce?

How can an leaders effectively communicate to improve employee confidence in their standards of honesty and integrity?

How can managers effectively communicate the goals and priorities of the organization?

To start, ask employees to help define effective communication.

Engaging Communication: Values

Key Qualities of Organizational Culture Promoting Employee Engagement:

(1) Clear organizational values about the agency's mission and workplace culture. Key Examples:

- BEP Core Values, Motto, Credo, etc. (Presented in March 2014)
- NRC's ISOCCER
 - Values widely discussed and understood across NRC
 - Significant effort placed on translating values into behaviors
- USDA-FNS revised mission, vision and values with employee input

Engaging Communication: Leadership

Key Qualities of Organizational Culture Promoting Employee Engagement:

(2) Leadership who set tone and expectations to implement and support employee engagement. Key Examples:

- NRC's Strategic Cascading Messaging
 - Leaders at every level are prepared to tell a coherent story
- FDIC's "Radical Transparency"
 - Chairman answered every possible question in person and via email box and also provided information on agency budget, performance ratings, awards distributions, etc.

Engaging Communication: Supervisors

Key Qualities of Organizational Culture Promoting Employee Engagement:

(3) Investment in frontline managers to strengthen supervisory skills.
Examples include:

- NASA's "Building Model Supervisors" (84 Supervisor Score, 2014 EVS)
- NRC's use of Emotional Intelligence and Servant Leadership (82)
- OPM's Selection, Training and Evaluation changes (81)
- FDIC's and USDA-FNS's use of Speed of Trust

Engaging Communication: Development

Key Qualities of Organizational Culture Promoting Employee Engagement:

(4) Investment in employees, including training, career maps, and input into work processes and innovations. Examples include:

- Portsmouth's Idea Boards and Training Centers
- OPM's use of Lean Six Sigma and Human Centered Design
- USDA-FNS's career path initiative

Employee Engagement: Call to Action

Culture Change Requires Action

President Obama's Management Agenda for People and Culture includes a goal to create a Culture of Excellence and Engagement.

- The overall short-term, measurable goal is to increase the Employee Engagement Index to 67 by the 2016 EVS (2014 score is 63)
- Every Department and Agency has been challenged to improve, with Senior Management officials conducting regular data-informed reviews
- OPM has provided more than 20,000 work unit level reports so actions can be targeted to address local challenges and concerns

Employee Engagement: What's Next?

- The CHCO-LMC Working Group will release helpful tools and findings on topics related to engagement and workplace culture, including a Best Practices Template and Solicitation, a Focus Group “Conversation Starters” Package, and a FEVS Data Analysis Guide
- Our labor partners believe strongly that pre-decisional involvement and improved labor relations will support increased employee engagement and improved workplace culture.
- Agencies who take a consistent approach that holds parties accountable over time are most likely to see improved results.

What can engagement stakeholders do together to make measurable progress over the next few years?