



## **“The Ethics Update”**

**April 2008**

### **Frank Bucaro’s monthly e-newsletter**

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#### **1. Can't afford 'employee engagement'? Guess again!**

Savvy companies today know that employee engagement is a key strategy for success. If you have ever tried to elicit the help of an apathetic employee or if you have ever been "wowed" by the knowledge and helpful attitude of an employee, then you have a good idea of what a difference employee engagement can make in the marketplace.

Employee engagement has been defined as, 'When employees are enthused and 'in gear' to impact your bottom line.' according to survey from Skillman, N.J. based Blessing White, a human resources consulting firm, titled: The State of Employee Engagement 2008.

One obstacle to implementing employee engagement techniques is the financial investment. With surveys to be distributed; feedback, analysis, presentations, program design and implementation, the task can easily seem daunting.

Jean Martin, Executive Director of the Corporate Leadership Council states that "engagement is comprised of both a rational and emotional commitment... and that the emotional side of engagement is four times more powerful than the rational side, when it comes to driving the business impacts we care about, which are essentially employees who want to stay with the company and employee productivity."

(What's the Big Deal About Employee Engagement? By Paula Ketter, T & D, January 2008. , American Society of Training and Development, [www.astd.org](http://www.astd.org).)

The rational side of this engagement equation deals mostly with salary, benefits, and professional development opportunities. The emotional commitment is what I like to focus on....anyone, regardless of budgets can implement simple tactics to help their employees feel engaged. A tight budget should not prevent you from moving forward! Particularly when the emotional side of employee engagement provides a multitude of opportunities that do not have to cost a penny, and can render powerful results!

A non-profit organization hired a new executive. As is the case with many non-profits, the budget was tight, the staff was over-worked, and fearful of losing their jobs. The office morale was tense and stressful as the new executive came on board.

After a reasonable period of orientation and observation, the executive decided to plan a staff development day for the small staff of four. There was no budget for things like this, so everyone was wondering what was going to happen.

The executive obtained a donation for the staff lunch and a free meeting room, offsite for the day. The focus for the day was organized around letting the staff offer their comments on the state of the organization. There was some venting, but carefully guided, turned into constructive feedback as well as brainstorming and problem solving. By the end of the day, the result was a list that the staff concluded, would make them more effective and efficient at their jobs and make their work more enjoyable. At the top of the list.... new computers and a new phone system...but also included being able to shut personal office doors to prevent unnecessary interruptions, and scheduling changes within the office.

The staff left the training day feeling that their feedback was valuable and that the executive had taken their concerns seriously. In return... the executive discovered a team that was renewed in their motivation and commitment to their work. The previously worn out, over worked, under appreciated staff, were now engaged as to how the non-profit was running and felt a vested interest in the success of their organization.

Approximately a year later, the staff received new computers and a phone system as the funds became available. For the original few hours of closing the office for the development day, the staff emerged motivated, uplifted and engaged. This newfound engagement benefited the organization in many ways, and eventually helped to increase the resources necessary for the new computer and phone system.

If costs have been an obstacle to getting your employees engaged, you might want to initially focus on the emotional side and often less expensive option. As the example above illustrates, engaging the employees at an emotional level, ignited the spark that eventually improved the organization's financial situation.

## **2. Bucaro Bit - Tip of the Month**

Take manageable steps towards engaging the employees within your responsibility.

Think about what can you do, today, as an individual to encourage employee engagement? Focus on developing the emotional components of engagement; watch what happens to the morale, company culture and the bottom line!

Set a goal, once a week/day, to exercise something that will contribute positively to engaging an employee.

Ideas:

- Take a minute to ask the receptionist of your office what she/he likes best about their job, next time you walk by their desk.

- Start a meeting by asking all attendees to offer the most positive challenge of their current position. Do this monthly!

- Send an email, asking employees to send you one idea each, on how to improve their job.

- Create a survey (see Resource #1 below), and ask all employees to anonymously, complete. Hold a meeting to discuss the answers.

- Most important- follow through. Once you ask questions, keep employees updated on the process. Maybe you can't do anything right now, to adjust, per their comments, suggestions...then say so, keep the lines of communication wide open.

### **3. Resources**

A. Workforce Management magazine has a great article on 12 questions to measure employee engagement. See how many of these you can answer affirmatively and you'll see how much work you need to do to get your people engaged!

<http://www.workforce.com/section/09/article/23/53/40.html>

B. The Leadership Dojo: Build Your Foundation as an Exemplary Leader. By Richard Strozzi-Heckler, published by Frog, LTD. 2007.

This book on leadership is fascinating! The author was a leadership trainer for the Army Special Forces and Green Berets and incorporates learning the human side of leadership to tasks at hand for leaders. Dojo training environment is based on: discipline, focus, introspection and most importantly the application of these insights.

This book is for you if you like a no nonsense approach to leadership today.

#### 4. More from Frank on Employee Engagement?

Frank's newest program, "Five Decisions That Will Make or Break Your Career & Your Business!" just released in February 2008, explores the intricacies of employee engagement and getting buy in. If you need a nudge in the right direction, or you need training programs to help employees become engaged and excited to work for you organization, contact Frank to discuss the possibilities! [www.frankbucaro.com](http://www.frankbucaro.com). 800-784-4476. [frank@frankbucaro.com](mailto:frank@frankbucaro.com)

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Frank C. Bucaro is known as an ethics expert who brings to light the serious subject of ethics with laugh-out-loud examples that result in a content-rich and surprisingly humorous approach to ethics in business today.

His newest program, "Five Decisions That Will Make or Break Your Career and Your Business" is now available! Call now to reserve a date on Frank's calendar!

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