



Strategic Planning Supports Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is much more than a buzzword or management trend. An extensive meta-analysis by Gallup on the connection between employee engagement and organizational outcomes found that "the relationship between [employee] engagement and performance at the business/work unit level is substantial and highly generalizable across organizations." Put simply, the more engaged our employees, the more successful our organization's performance.

How do organizations cultivate employee engagement? Strategic planning is an often overlooked but valuable tool for fueling employee engagement. Strategic plans can provide our teams with purpose and clarity and create shared accountability for plan success - essential components for fostering employee engagement at every level of our organization.

Emphasize Purpose

When employees feel connected to your organization's mission or purpose, it can be a powerful motivator. Why does your organization exist? How does your organization serve your users and community? According to Gallop, a clear understanding of how an employee contributes to the organization's mission can be a form of "emotional compensation." The strategic planning process, which often includes developing, revising, or confirming your organizational mission, offers an opportunity to emphasize your organization's "why."

Take Action:

- **Communicate and Reinforce:** Share your mission and values with your team. Add your mission to meeting agendas and reports and reinforce it during team development days and retreats.
- **Make it Personal:** Help your employees make connections between your mission and their individual roles and duties. Encourage managers to discuss the organization's mission during performance reviews and team meetings, making explicit connections between this larger purpose and the work and outputs of their team.



Unveil Clarity

Engaged employees know what's expected of them and what success looks like. Your strategic plan's goals and objectives can help set clear expectations for your teams by creating clarity around your organization's priorities and future direction. Through the sharing of plan progress and by acknowledging employee contributions, organizations can demonstrate a commitment to forward momentum. Regular sharing of plan progress also maintains the plan's visibility throughout the plan's timeline, keeping the plan top-of-mind.

Take Action:

- **Be Transparent:** Regularly share progress updates on achieving plan goals and objectives, including acknowledging roadblocks, setbacks, and changes.
- **Make the Plan Measurable:** Ensure your strategic plan's objectives include metrics and measures of success. Assign deadlines for achieving each objective.
- **Celebrate Successes:** Recognize and reward plan success in reporting and recognition activities, emphasizing how your employees and teams have supported plan goals and objectives.

Create a Culture of Shared Accountability

A culture of shared accountability for plan success engages your teams and is the key to making your strategic plan a reality. How will your departments and teams support plan goals? Who will be responsible for implementing plan objectives?

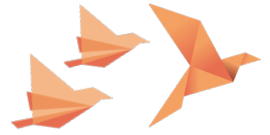
Strategic planning shouldn't end with a final draft - implementation planning helps turn plan goals and objectives into an action plan. Breaking goals and objectives into smaller actions and assigning ownership of objectives and actions during implementation planning brings employees into the work of the plans, creating shared accountability.

Take Action:

- **Empower your Teams:** Involve your employees and teams in implementation planning, empowering individuals to suggest and take ownership of actions that support your plan.
- **Support and Acknowledge:** Acknowledge those who take accountability for objectives and actions and offer support and resources to ensure their success.
- **Take Planning to the Next Level:** Encourage the development of department or team plans connected with your organizational strategic plan. Tie a department's planned actions to your organization's goals and objectives.
- **Create Alignment:** Create and maintain alignment with your organization's strategy by including prompts in funding and project requests asking how these activities support your mission, goals, and objectives.

Set the Stage for Continued Engagement

It's never too early to build a culture of shared accountability and commitment to your organization's purpose and plan. Organizations can jumpstart employee engagement by using your plan as an onboarding tool with new hires. Onboarding offers an excellent opportunity to share your mission, explain the plan's goals and any progress already achieved, and discuss the new hire's role in supporting plan success.



Take Action:

- **Start Early:** Encourage managers to discuss the plan early in an employee's tenure and during conversations about goal-setting and performance expectations. Celebrate small victories in supporting plan goals, objectives, and actions to reinforce an employee's impact on plan success.
- **Provide Mentorship:** Assign new hires a mentor who can model behaviors aligned with the plan and help foster a connection to your organization's purpose.

Plan for Engagement

Research shows that engaged employees aren't only happier – they're more committed, productive, and innovative. Strategic planning offers powerful opportunities to fuel employee engagement by helping your teams connect with your organization's purpose and future success.

Read more at <http://www.Essentiam.com> or contact us today
to take the next step toward accelerated success.