

Tips to Boost Employee Engagement with a Town Hall Meeting

Categories : [EMPLOYER HOT TOPICS](#)

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Employee engagement remained [stagnant in 2015](#), with only 32% of U.S. employees reportedly engaged in their workplace. The number for 2014 was almost exactly the same – 31.5%. The number one cause? Poor communication. If your employees view communication from the management team to be poor, then your organization is probably facing some serious problems.

But the good news is that by improving communication, you are providing a large part of the solution. When employees feel like they know what is going on, they have a greater level of satisfaction (and are therefore more engaged) with their job, their coworkers and their company.

The key is to let the communication flow both ways, and one thing that can help are “town hall meetings”. They can be scheduled and conducted for many different reasonsannouncing a new benefit / new products or services / company milestones, or discussing a new policy / issue of concern.

To boost employee morale, these meetings must be timely and contain authentic dialogue. They should not be choreographed; otherwise, you will end up with is a quiet, disengaged audience checking out their smartphones while leadership drones on and on and on.

Here are 6 more tips to conducting a responsive and effective town hall meeting.

1. Promote the Event Ahead of Time. Bottom line is if your employees do not know about the town hall meeting, they will not participate in the town hall meeting.
2. Focus on having an informal and candid conversationnot giving a presentation. In its

most traditional sense, a town hall meeting taps into a New England tradition of democracy citizens came together and engaged in energetic debates. This same concept needs to be brought into play with senior management. Presentations with lots of PowerPoint slides allows leaders to talk, but they do not allow them to converse.

3. Try different things. Town halls work better when you mix it up a bit. Included non-leadership people among the presenters. Conduct interviews. Try a panel discussion. You will be surprised at the level of engagement you get when you think out of the box and try different formats.
4. Work with the audience. It is well known that most employees get nervous about asking questions in front of others. They do not want to sound stupid or invoke their bosses' wrath by asking "the wrong question". Encourage questions, but if there is a level of fear, utilize the interview format to ask the questions from them – anonymously.
5. Remember that boosting morale starts at the upper level. Attitude is everything, so all executives should model positivity. All members of the leadership team should go to the town hall meeting and actively participate.
6. Follow up with what was heard and learned. Communication does not stop at the end of the event. Keep it alive by capturing highlights in a video, blog, or a variety of emails and even a brief questionnaire. You might learn something to make the next town hall meeting even more informative and worthwhile.

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