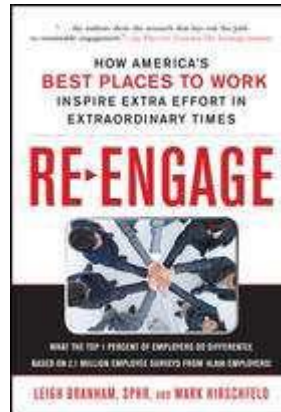


Re-Engage:
How America's Best Workplaces Inspire Extra Effort in Extraordinary Times
(McGraw-Hill, February, 2010)
By Leigh Branham and Mark Hirschfeld



Based on the Voices of 2.1 Million Employees from 10,000 Employers!

Among employee engagement studies that have included a representative cross-section of small, medium-sized, and large employers, this is the largest and most comprehensive ever conducted. *Re-Engage* offers solid action recommendations and several unique insights based on authoritative research.

What employees are saying they need to be more engaged at work:

▪ **"Senior Leaders, Engagement Starts With You!"**

For at least the last decade the conventional wisdom has been that "people leave managers, not companies." All too many senior leaders took this as license to delegate responsibility for employee engagement initiatives to middle managers and supervisors. Although direct managers are still extremely important to the engagement process, our recent data clearly show that senior leaders are the prime movers--setting the tone and shaping the culture. We recommend that senior leaders who want "*Best-Place Employer*" status for their organizations take the lead by setting a direction that employees believe in, dumping outmoded command-and-control mindsets, tapping the ideas of employees, eliminating "we-they" distinctions, forgoing excessive perks and bonuses, and holding managers accountable for treating people right.

▪ **"What Motivates Us Is Changing—Try to Keep Up!"**

We cite 27 studies conducted over the last 20 years showing that more engaged workforces are more productive workforces. However, as times and economic conditions change, employees' perceptions of what's important changes as well. Just in the last eight years, since 9/11, Enron, the entry of Millennials into the workforce, the decline in company-paid health benefits, and the financial collapse of 2008 all have combined to effect changes in worker expectations. Employees are voicing their concerns that their employers are less concerned about their general well-being, more far more concerned about their job security, and more cynical about leaders, especially on

the issue of caring more about the welfare of the organization than their own self-interests. We propose specific ways to deal with these concerns in ways that restore trust and the feeling of being cared for--practices that the *Best-Places* are using to stay abreast of employee expectations and remain the winning workplaces they are.

- **"Give...and We'll Give Back!"**

Regarding benefits, there has been a dramatic shift among winning employers. Among other things, they are helping employees take greater responsibility for their own health in a way that also lets them know the company cares. In doing so they are reducing unnecessary health care claims and more effectively managing costs. Our finding is that enlightened employers are showing the way--shining the light on one "cure" for our health care crisis! We tell the compelling stories of winning workplaces that implementing progressive strategies reduce health care costs, improve communication with employees about changes in benefits, and take a more "whole person" approach—one that benefits both employee and employer alike.

- **"Help Us Manage Our Differences!"**

Having four distinct generations--Millennials, Xers, Boomers, and Traditionalists--in the workplace (for the first time in history!) has made teamwork, communication, and one-size-fits-all employment and management practices more difficult. Our findings--that some of the least age-diverse employers are also the most engaged--is a sobering one. It means that unless age-diverse employers are doing extraordinary things to manage generational differences and promote teamwork while treating everyone as individuals, engagement levels will erode. Among the best practices we recommend that *Best-Places* employers use to overcome generational differences are these: training older managers to meet Millennials halfway by giving more feedback, implementing state-of-the-art "on-boarding" practices, providing generation Xers more varied, horizontal, and/or rotational assignments to broaden their experience when their path to promotion may be blocked, promoting "reverse mentoring" of older managers in web 2.0, and encouraging collaboration and social networking while requiring more face-to-face communication.

- **"Manage Our Growth So We Don't Lose the Team-Feeling!"**

Companies want and need to grow. As workplaces grow larger than 150 employees, they tend to reach a tipping point that reduces teamwork and camaraderie. Workforce population growth can have an extremely negative and unexpected impact on employee engagement, a finding that other employee engagement researchers have not reported. Why not? Because until now no other research firm has had access to a database that matches what *Quantum Workplace* offers--insights based on 7,000 small and medium-size employers. We present case studies that explore this dynamic and reveal how some employers have grown larger while maintaining high levels of teamwork and engagement.

- **"Give Us Hope in Times of Uncertainty!"**

Employee engagement, once thought to be primarily within the control of management, can be negatively influenced by outside forces if they rise to the level of our current economic downturn. Yet, in spite of these powerful external forces, *Best-Places* employers have actually increased their levels of employee engagement after the "economic Pearl Harbor" of 2008, while engagement levels at most employers have dropped precipitously. The authors identify five

differentiating practices that winning workplaces are using to weather the economic storm and keep employees engaged. Specific practices include: holding "50-50" meetings where the CEO responds to any and all questions, creating company blogs inviting employees to submit money-making ideas for cash rewards, confronting poor performance, refusing to eliminate recognition events and cut training budgets, and insisting that overstressed and burned-out employees take vacations.

- **"Kill the Cookie Cutter!"**

Much of the challenge facing employers today involves taking the practices we describe and making them live within their workplaces. We offer a fresh approach that helps employers apply their "signature" to the engagement practices we recommend. We caution managers and executives that they should not attempt to "copycat" or "bolt on" what other employers do. Rather, they should select from among the "leading" practices we present those that best serve the unique business objectives and meet the needs of their critical talent. This approach is bolstered by in-depth studies of some of the most engaged workplaces in America. We highlight employers like Rackspace Hosting, which has developed an employment brand that not only engages current employees, but acts as a recruiting magnet for those who buy into their "fanatical service" model.

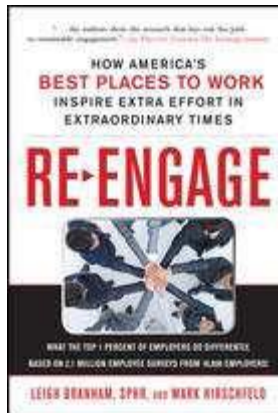
For more information, go to www.re-engagebook.com or contact:

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Key Findings from *Re-Engage: How America's Best Places to Work Inspire Extra Effort in Extraordinary Times* (McGraw-Hill, 2010)



Based on Branham & Hirschfeld's analysis of 2.1 million employee engagement surveys and 100,000 verbatim comments submitted in *Best-Places-to-Work* competitions held 2004-2009 in 44 U.S. cities, conducted by Quantum Workplace, Omaha, Nebraska and sponsored by American City Business Journals, Charlotte, North Carolina.

- Winning workplaces (employers with the highest engagement scores) differentiated themselves by scoring extremely high on questions that defined six universal engagement drivers.
- Companies scoring in the top quartile of competing companies had 74% positive comments, while those scoring in the second quartile had 59% positive comments, those in the 3rd quartile had 40% positive comments, and 4th quartile employers had 17% positive comments.
- Tough economic times make engaging employees more challenging.
- Employers whose employee engagement scores increased during the first year of the recession used very different people management and communication practices than those employers whose scores decreased.
- Company sites with more than 150 employees tend to have lower engagement scores.
- The broader the age range in a given company's workforce (the more generational diversity), the more difficult it is to maintain a high levels of employee engagement, generally speaking.

- Employee engagement tends to increase with age.
- Senior leadership has become the number one driver of employee engagement in the last five years, slightly surpassing the impact of direct managers.
- Senior leaders and managers are typically more engaged than salaried and hourly employees.
- Over the last five years employee benefits/well-being has risen in importance from a lower-ranking employee satisfaction factor to one of six key workforce engagement drivers.

To purchase *Re-Engage* or visit the book website (where you can take the Universal Employee Engagement Drivers Survey or the Self-Engagement Survey) go to:

www.re-engagebook.com

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The Six Universal Drivers of Employee Engagement
(from *Re-Engage: How America's Best Places to Work
Inspire Extra Effort in Extraordinary Times* (McGraw-Hill, 2010))



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