

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Sponsors
William Fleming, Executive Sponsor/Governance
Tyra Dent Smith, Executive Sponsor/Governance
Towanda Brooks, Executive Sponsor/Governance
Danny Sorrells, Program Manager

FROM: Project Unit 4 – Employee Engagement Team
Nancy Williams, Team Leader
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Cynthia Flynn, Team Member
Ronda Holbrook, Team Member
Lorraine Shackelford, Team Member

SUBJECT: Employee Engagement Action Plan 2012

Background

The purpose and mission of the Employee Engagement Team (EET) is to create an environment that values and supports employee engagement and promotes a healthy organization by developing internal programs and initiatives for OHRM employees. The Employee Engagement Team Charter states that the Team will deliver a yearly engagement action plan which outlines the initiatives to be focused on during the coming year. The EET has been in consultation with the Corporate Leadership Council (CLC) and based on thorough research conducted by the CLC has identified two areas of focus for the 2012 calendar-year.

Employee Engagement Research

Research shows that most approaches to measuring and managing employee engagement in today's work environment are flawed. Traditional engagement approaches provide a band-aid or quick fix, but lack long term benefits or lasting results and potentially ignore up to 65% of the reasons why employees disengage. Some potential reasons for low returns on engagement are: (1) engagement is less important now than in the past;¹ (2) engagement measures are underperforming; (3) Engagement drivers are incorrectly identified or used and (4) engagement is not used as an input into broader business decisions. To combat these causes, CLC tested a variety of drivers and agents and prioritized them into seven areas of focus to create and leverage

¹ This is the perspective of organizations that have low employee turnover.

sustainable employee engagement. The seven areas of focus are: (1) role clarity; (2) career management; (3) performance management (4) networking; (5) rewards; (6) work environment and (7) values.

Action Items

Based on the research conducted by the EET, outlined below are the initiatives the Employee Engagement Team would like to focus on for the 2012 Action Plan. We believe that these initiatives will help foster greater employee engagement in the areas of work environment and organizational values:

Work Environment:

I. Real Talk Sessions

The RealTalk sessions are designed to provide a venue for handling issues that are best discussed in private, for fostering a robust dialogue, and strengthening trust and communication. The sessions are a meaningful method for protecting and advancing the best interests of the organization.

The Employee Engagement team (EET) members will be responsible for conducting the quarterly sessions to address important organizational issues with the employees of the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM). Participation in the sessions is voluntary for all employees.

The sessions will serve three core functions: (1) assure confidentiality, (2) create a mechanism for open communication, and (3) enhance relationships among employees and the Human Resources Managers.

The RealTalk sessions will involve employees only; the team needs time alone to strengthen relationships and communication. The team needs an opportunity to get to know and trust each other, personally and collectively. They need to be able to speak freely to air concerns and explore all aspects of issues. For example, if management is present prior to the building a strong relationship within the group, the employees may be reluctant to address issues in front of managers for fear of undermining his or her authority. In other instances, employees may wish to discuss sensitive topics like performance, promotion opportunity or morale. EET has a responsibility to maintain confidentiality to protect the organization.

The managers will be notified to address topics that warrant special treatment. In effect, the sessions with managers may take place before, or at the end of a session. The

management sessions will be held by the OHRM Director and the EET members may be invited to join for part or all of the session. The managers' sessions are an effective method for dealing with certain kinds of issues, provided by feedback from the RealTalk sessions.

Basic Guidelines for the Real Talk Sessions

	Sessions with Employees	Sessions with Managers
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create a forum that is not influenced, nor enforced by management • To encourage more open communication among employees • To discuss issues related to the way our organization operates • To address issues related to the management • To build capacity for healthy discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain confidentiality • To discuss highly sensitive business issues in private • To foster a more constructive partnership between the employees and managers • To encourage more open communication for resolving issues
Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pulse Check • Performance • Succession planning (Ideas for improving turn over in the organization) • Open Topics suggested by OHRM employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major business issues • Crisis management • Roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the managers session • Topics suggested by Management
Rules of Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect Others Opinion • Topics discussed during the session Stays among the attendees, unless it's an issue for the EET members to address to management. • Come with the problem, and a suggestion for a Solution • Keep An Open Mind to suggestions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect Others Opinion • Keep An Open Mind to suggestions • Meetings will begin and end on time.
Invitees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OHRM Employees • EET members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR Managers • EET members
Frequency	Quarterly	As Needed, e.g., for critical issues

II. Managing By Walking Around

Managing by Walking Around is a very simple but vastly underused management best practice. Managing by walking around keeps managers in touch with the people of the organization and is more likely to facilitate the productivity and total quality management of the organization. Management by walking around emphasizes the importance of interpersonal contact, open appreciation, and recognition. It is one of the most important ways to build respect and performance in the workplace. The Engagement Team needs the support of management in building a rapport within the immediate office. This is a start in improving our culture by demonstrating to employees that they matter and letting them know that the work they do is critical to the success of our organization. The team has developed 10 principles that would guide managers in the Managing By Walking Around (MBWA) initiative. However, in order to receive the optimum outcome, managers must be committed to putting these principles into practice. The Engagement Team will conduct periodic pulse surveys in order to track the success of this initiative.

- Carry out MBWA for All Employees
 - It may appear that being in such close contact with direct reports would make MBWA seem redundant or unnecessary. The real power of this technique lies in the time managers spend with their employees. It adds value when managers have face to face communication with their direct reports and lets the employee know that his or her work is important.
- Do it as Often as Possible
 - MBWA sends positive messages to employees. It reveals the manager's interest in the employee and in their work, and it says you don't consider yourself "too good" to spend time with them. MBWA also enables managers to stay in touch with what is going on in their division. Managers should aim to put aside at least thirty minutes to one hour per week to spend time all employees. Aim for once a quarter to see those you must travel long distances to visit.
- Go It Alone
 - MBWA is more meaningful when managers visit with employees alone, and one-on-one. It encourages more honest dialogue and speaks loudly of your personal commitment to the idea.
- Don't Circumvent Subordinate Managers

- Some employees may take advantage of a Senior Manager's presence to complain about a supervisor who is their subordinate. Counsel them to discuss the issue fully with their direct supervisor first. If the Senior Manager has cause to question the supervisor's judgment, don't indicate to the employee, but follow up privately with the subordinate supervisor.
- Ask Questions
 - MBWA is a great opportunity to observe those "moments of truth" when employees interact with clients. Ask them to tell you a little bit about the files, projects or duties they are working on. Take care to sound inquisitive rather than intrusive.
- Watch and Listen
 - Take in everything. Listen to the words and tone of employees as they speak to you and to each other. You'll learn a lot about their motivation and their levels of satisfaction. You can observe a lot just by watching.
- Share Organizational Goals
 - The organizational view often only changes for the leader of an organization. MBWA is a solid opportunity to make sure that when you lead your team in a new direction, the employees behind you won't trip over themselves trying to follow. Tell them about the organization's vision for the future, and where your vision for the department / unit/ section fits in with the "big picture." Reveal the goals and objectives that you want them to help you fulfill together as a team. Ask them for their vision, and hold an open discussion.
- Be the Bearer of Good News
 - Walk around armed with information about recent successes or positive initiatives. Give employees good news. Increase their confidence and brighten their outlook. So often employees are fed only gloom and doom. Neutralize pessimism with your own optimism, without being non-credible.
- Have Fun
 - This is a chance to lighten up, joke around, and show your softer side without being disrespectful or clowning around. Show employees that work should be fun and that you enjoy it too.
- Don't be Critical
 - When the manager witnesses a performance gone wrong, don't criticize the performer. Correct on the spot anything that must be redone, but if the employee is not a direct report wait to speak to the wrongdoer's supervisor or a better opportunity to bring about corrective action. Don't give the appearance that MBWA was to catch the employee doing something incorrectly.
- Look for Success

- Look for victories rather than failures. When you find one, applaud it. When you run into one of the many unsung heroes in your division, thank them on the spot, being careful not to embarrass them in front of peers or to leave out other deserving employees.

Organizational Values:

III. OHRM Career Service\ Performance Recognition Program:

The Career Service Recognition Program was created for the Department to recognize employees who complete 10 years of federal service, and thereafter at 5-year intervals up to 50 years of service. This policy was issued April 8, 1992, and we would like to incorporate this program as an initiative for celebrating the longevity of employee service to the Federal Government. The Employee Engagement team will revitalize this program to focus on improving employee satisfaction.

The EET members will coordinate with the Awards Officer in DOCHROC to determine the eligible years of service for the employees. The Award Officer will prepare the certificate package for the eligible employees. If the employee becomes eligible within the time frame of the next All Hands, the employee will be presented their certificate package from their servicing manager, and the employee's name will be announced at the next upcoming All Hands.

Employees will receive the following personalized certificate and service emblem based on the amount of years being recognized for:

- Bronze Certificate and Emblem (10 and 15 years)
- Silver Certificate and Emblem (20 and 25 years)
- Gold Certificate and Emblem (30, 35, 40, 45, and 50 years)

Note: The Secretary signs 50-year certificates.

The Performance Recognition Program is an opportunity for employees to be recognized for their performance by their customers and/or supervisors. Also, the program offers a Peer-to-Peer recognition, which allows employees at all levels to express informal recognition among co-workers. Employees are able to express appreciation for their peers who make a significant difference in everyday work life. The recognized employees will be nominated to receive the employee of the month.

The recognition entries will be submitted via SurveyMonkey, reviewed by the EET members, submitted to the OHRM Director/Deputy and announced at the OHRM All Hands meeting.

IV. New Employee Ambassador Program

The purpose of the New Employee Ambassador Program is to pair new OHRM employees with a designated current OHRM employee to assist in facilitating a seamless transition for new employees entering into the organization. This program is established above and beyond the standard OHRM Entry On Duty orientation process. In this program, the Employee Engagement Team will serve as an “*Employee Ambassador*” on behalf of the new employee in proactively identifying various internal resources and providing responses to inquiries from new employees related to becoming oriented to OHRM. The intent of the program is to develop organic relationships that will increase over time. In addition, the program aims to introduce OHRM’s customer service mission, values and to immediately demonstrate employee importance.

OHRM employees apply in October to serve for a one (1) year period on the Employee Engagement Team, as an “*Employee Ambassador*” for new employees joining OHRM in the upcoming calendar year. If the paired employees mutually decide to continue this role beyond the official capacity, the willing parties are free to do so.

There are a maximum total of six (6) employees in the “*Employee Ambassador*” pool for the calendar year. The Director, Office of Staffing Recruitment and Classification (OSRC) notify the Chair of the OEI Employee Engagement team of upcoming OHRM new employees two (2) weeks prior to their EOD date.

Briefings on how to be an effective “*Employee Ambassador*” will be provided by the OEI Employee Engagement Team prior to the new employees EOD.

The approval process is also outlined below in Section D of this document.

a. Employee Eligibility:

Current employee must have worked for OHRM for a minimum of six (6) months at the time of submitting an application;

The employee must have and maintain a performance rating of at least Fully Successful (if applicable) at the time of submitting an application and while serving in the program;

No adverse actions related to conduct or performance can be in affect or pending on the employee at the time of submitting an application or while serving in the program;

Reputation for providing good customer service and showing a passion for OHRM, their work, and the wellbeing of others

b. Approval Procedures:

The Director and Deputy Director for OHRM in collaboration with the employees' official supervisor of record will review and provide application determination results to the supervisor by December of the calendar year. Written justifications from the Director or Deputy for OHRM must be submitted at this time to the supervisor specifying the performance related rationale for any declined applications. The supervisor must provide this feedback directly to the employee.

c. Process and Responsibilities:

The designated "*Employee Ambassador*" welcomes and meets with the new employee in person after the EOD (*where possible*), introducing themselves and to do an initial "check-in" as to how the EOD went and if they have any questions. The "*Employee Ambassador*" provides the new employee with contact information (*and provide brief bio/role in OHRM if desired*).

The "*Employee Ambassador*" will send an OHRM Broadcast e-mail introducing the new employee.

The "*Employee Ambassador*" will send a lunch invite to the new employee within the first week to establish rapport and give the new employee an opportunity to ask any questions related to OHRM, DOC, and surrounding facilities.

The "*Employee Ambassador*" will follow-up within three weeks after EOD date for a **face-to-face** pulse check, and determine if the new employee has any additional questions.

Thirty (30) days after the pulse check, the "*Employee Ambassador*" provides the new employee a brief survey obtaining feedback from the new employee regarding this program and also obtains any suggested areas for improvement. The new employee will return the survey to the OEI Engagement Team for review to monitor the program.

As a representative of OHRM, the "*Employee Ambassador*" shall at all times represent the organization in a professional and productive position in conversations and interactions with the new employee. Failure to do so will result in removal of the "*Employee Ambassador*" from the program.

PROJECT SPONSORS ENDORSEMENT

NOTE: This endorsement gives the Employee Engagement Team authority and permission to implement the initiatives outlined above and develop additional engagement initiatives during the 2012 calendar-year.

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Role: Executive Sponsor/Governance Board Member

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