



The Employee Engagement Network  
Produced by David Zinger and John Junson



**small engagements**

# small engagements

## Today At Work...



# small engagements

Ignite employee engagement with small and significant actions. The workplace of today has gone from doing more with less, to doing everything with nothing. We suffer from a lack of capacity and time for big engagement programs. In January of 2013 members of the 5600 member Employee Engagement Network were invited to contribute their “small” actions or ideas for engagement. As you read and act on their recommendations you will learn the power of small being the new significant to increase employee engagement.

David Zinger  
Employee Engagement Network Founder and Host  
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# small engagements

Small, simple and free - just say thank you. My employee research shows that a fundamental human need is to be recognised and acknowledged - management is often “too busy” to spend just a few minutes to say thanks - it almost seems to them that it is too easy to work - but it does.

**susan walker**



# small engagements

Simply connect. Make time to have truly meaningful conversations with people that reach beyond “How ya doin? How’s the kids?” and other small talk. People like to be noticed and crave feeling important enough that others are genuinely interested in them, not just in what they do!

**craig althof**



# small engagements

My small idea? Create an organisational seed-fund that individuals/teams can access with bids for money to support the set-up & implementation of improvement ideas & innovation. Engagement through harnessing ideas and creativity within the organisation.

**sandy wilkie**



# small engagements

In my opinion, the most important employee engagement technique is personal contact. Similar to what Craig said, a simple visit to a person's office or cubicle to say hi, has a huge impact. As a manager and a leader, my advice is - take a few minutes every day to simply walk on the floor, and connect with your team members.

**siddhesh bhobe**



# small engagements

I'll echo this one, on a recent course a colleague specifically mentioned that every day I make a point of going around the whole building to say hi to people. I said 'wow, you noticed' and he said 'yes because you're the only one who does it'. So, stage 2 - encourage the directors and managers to do the same!

**lydia woodroff**





# small engagements

I would like to set up a session with my team to establish what we can do as a collective to create an engaging environment and also to have a one on one session with the individual team members to establish how they would like to be recognised for a job well done.

**polelo madalane**



# small engagements

I've done some research with Scott Jeffrey, PhD, who has indicated that 'thank you' has a meaningful impact on people's performance. 'Thank you' positively impacts individuals and the culture of the enterprise. Thank you is free, 100% recyclable, and always appreciated.

**tim houlihan**



# small engagements

Break bread. Create a monthly tour group that breaks silos over lunch by crossing departments. Encourage both organic and moderated conversation. Want to go all out? Offer the lunch for free.

## wendy flanagan



# small engagements

Be present to connect in conversations – It's been said that attention is oxygen for relationships. When meeting with people, get in the habit of being present by staying focused on them and giving them your full attention. Be engaged and curious by asking questions and then asking follow-up questions to clarify. Listen carefully to words and observe facial expressions and body cues. Pause before you respond to make certain they have finished what they wanted to say. Don't check your smart phone, don't look at your watch, don't look around the room or let your mind wander. Apply this to conversations with colleagues at work and with your family and friends outside of work.

**michael lee stallard**



# small engagements

Simply listen.

**terrence seamon**



# small engagements

Of course, mine is to CARE at work = Communicate,  
Appreciate, Respect, Encourage.

**al smith**



# small engagements

Just an observation...except for Sandy's "seed fund" thought (which we all know would end up bringing a healthy return!) none of these are especially taxing, or capital intensive or even require a whole lot of effort. It's amazing how things that can deliver such huge benefit for such a tiny investment are still so rare to find.

**craig althof**



# small engagements

I would like to add - smile and have fun! Find time to add a bit of humor into someone else's day and your own. It relieves stress and energizes yourself and those around you.

## kenda marks





# small engagements

Build an emotional connection with employees. Show a true interest in them with small talk (get to know them). Spend quality time with your team. Designate an employee appreciation day where you provide your team with a small gift or outing. If budget does not allow (utilize pinterest) there are tons of creative ideas on there that are cost effective. If your budget allows for an outing, take your team to a (movie, garden, zoo, museum or even a food bank). Just get connected!

**denise tatum**



# small engagements

I want to make “engagimentation” a common term in the manager’s lexicon, with the term meaning the simple, real act of engaging people in workplace improvement initiatives of any kind and the translation of those ideas into the actual implementation of things. We already have all the knowledge and all of the tools to make this happen; it is simply convincing managements (and getting supervisors to actually act on the reality) that this is important.

Engagimentation has big impacts on performance and motivation. Feeling actually engaged links to intrinsic motivation and to real collaboration and teamwork.

Companies talk about engagement; this is about acting on those concepts. Supervisors do know how to implement change in most workplaces, but getting them to commit to let go and actually allow people to be engaged seems to be a difficult step in the power paradigm. Have fun out there!.

**dr. scott simmerman**



# small engagements

Apply the lessons from the landmark research done by Ken Kovach at George Mason University years ago. He asked thousands of workers in different organizations what the main drivers were for their discretionary effort (i.e. going the extra mile). Then he asked their managers what they thought the extra-effort drivers were for employees. The top three things employees identified were interesting work, appreciation of work done, and being in on information - which cost the company very little. The top three things identified by managers as the extra-effort drivers were good wages, job security and chance to advance - which cost a lot and are hard to deliver.

## les landes



# small engagements

Understand that employee engagement is not just something that managers need to do with employees. It's also something that employees need to do with one another. Employee engagement is rooted in trust, appreciation and commitment to one another's mutual success up, down and sideways throughout the organization. One way to help employees gain that trust and appreciation is through a group exercise that's based on David Cooperrider's "appreciative inquiry" process. You can use it with any size team, but the mechanics need to be adjusted somewhat depending on the size of the group. I'm happy to share the form and the guidelines I use with anyone who wants it. Just send me a quick reply at [leslandes@landesassociates.com](mailto:leslandes@landesassociates.com)

## les landes



# small engagements

Ask each person in your team or workgroup “If you knew you would get the support and the resources you need, what do you think is the very best thing you personally could do for the business right now?” Encourage people to share these thoughts with you and with each other. See what happens.

**antony shearn**



# small engagements

Love the ideas being expressed. My focus in 2013 will be to, as respectfully as I can, challenge those areas that prompt disengagement like systemic barriers, negative zeitgeists, and leaders that are closing doors versus opening them. I call this focus “cleaning up my room” so the next person in it can move about freely and comfortably. (taking care of my circle of influence to both create engagement opportunities and to extinguish disengagers)

## les hudson



# small engagements

Self-awareness: becoming more aware of ourselves, our behaviours, actions and their impact on others. Reflecting on and learning to consciously adopting engaging behaviours with our people.

**gloria lombardi**



# small engagements

Simply let go.

**terrence seamon**





# small engagements

Be consistent: If the goal is to improve on-time delivery than work on the common goal and work tirelessly with the team to achieve/exceed the target.

**neeraj choudhary**



# small engagements

I would like to add engagement is a relationship and thus it is important for people to know where they stand in that relationship - so clearly articulate the purpose of the organisation and where that individual and their role/contribution fits in...

**susan walker**



# small engagements

Last year my brother took over a new department in Canberra. In the first few weeks he met every staff member and memorised at least one thing about them - such and sport interests, football club, kids names etc. It's a small thing (but takes effort) and has a huge impact.

**mark schenk**



# small engagements

Power of one - engage one associate per day and watch them pay it forward.

**carl a. donato jr**



# small engagements

Simply learn.

**terrence seamon**



# small engagements

Challenge all employees to weave their brand into the success of the company. This will require learning, stretching and goal achievement from employees which are the traits of a highly engaged employee.

**burt nehmer**



# small engagements

Simply look.

## terrence seamon



# small engagements

Whenever someone has won an award or appreciation, ask them about it. When we show a genuine interest and curiosity on a pleasant topic, even the most reticent person is happy to talk. The accomplishment need not necessarily be work-related.

**ganesh ramakrishnan**





# small engagements

For me, one simple concept seems to be continually lost in how managers manage and how organizations dis-involve and dis-engage and that is: Nobody ever washes a rental car.

It is really easy to generate involvement and engagement by simply asking (first) for the ideas of the people and then implementing those ideas (second). It is this second step that seems most difficult (or impossible) for clunky, bureaucratic, political organizations with poor employee cultures. It is easy for others where some level of trust and effectiveness are found believable.

Managers need to focus on dis-un-engagement and the easiest way to do that is to develop teams owning the implementation of improvements. Managers tend to be the problem.

**dr. scott simmerman**



# small engagements

Connect others. I'm paying extra attention to people in client organizations who should be connected, but aren't. It's often easier for those of us on the "outside" to spot those missing connections than those immersed in their daily tasks on the "inside".

**steve roesler**



# small engagements

It's amazing how far something little can go. I sent my department a list of colours to wear each day. ie .. Monday, yellow, Tuesday, green, Wednesday, purple etc. Then said we'd just sit back and see how long it took anyone in any other department to notice. As a team, it was fun. One would be at the fax machine, someone else talking to accounting and they'd look at each other across the room and laugh. It actually took eight days ... and only then because we all walked in a row around the entire 2nd floor in a line together with red shirts on. Silly, easy fun but was a great team builder. I'm looking for more of these 'small things go far'.

**valerie pals**



# small engagements

Bake or buy a cake or muffins and sit down with your staff for a morning or afternoon tea. It's amazing what happens when leaders do this.

**karen schmidt**



# small engagements

Take an employee out to lunch: Treat your direct reports to lunch. Talk about something other than work. Try to care about them as people rather than just your workers. When you care about them, they'll be far more likely to care about you.

**thad peterson**



# small engagements

'Pat on the back' whether employee has made a small or big contribution.

## prarthana alley



# small engagements

Create openness to share Ideas, thoughts and feeling among workers and managers so they may work in a positive and harmonious way in their work besides maintaining work - life balance.

**mahendra k shukla**



# small engagements

Everyone has a story; each person should write their story in 6 words or less. It is the essence of simplicity and living your daily values with a simple phrase. I'll share my story; Listen, engage, adapt, dream...lead! What is your story?

**naomi caietti**





# small engagements

Recognition of the “little” achievements. Sometimes, a task appears daunting or there’s a lack of confidence. Others might have done this before (and not left particularly good instructions on how to do it again) - but it still needs to be done. Perhaps it’s just been waiting for someone to pick up for the last 52 weeks and simply make happen (or go away)? Whatever it is, tell someone well done when they’ve fixed something you never got around to doing, or the first time they’ve figured out (with those dodgy notes) how to run some process, or achieved something they’ve not done before.

If you can also let them know how their achievement helped something further up in the business, even better. (For example, the Service Pack updates on the servers means the migration has just been completed, that customer list export was mail-merged and we have responses coming in, the client said thank you for investigating).

**dan wardle**



# small engagements

Simply beam.

**terrence seamon**



# small engagements

As I take over as president in a non-profit, heavy volunteer organization, it is all about recognition and thanks. I like to send hand written personal notes to connect, thank and engage our volunteers, long-term members and sponsors for our events. It is a lost art that really stands out for people. I started with Christmas cards to all board members and have now started to write personal notes of thanks to all association members with 15 years or more of service.

**kathy fitzpatrick**



# small engagements

Joining my staff for lunch at least once a month to build rapport and deepen our relationships.

**marianne riggenbach**



# small engagements

Ask-listen. This is the essence of leadership and employee engagement. It is the difference between management and leadership. Managers give orders. Leaders ask questions and listen. People are committed to their own solutions and it all begins with asking for their input.

**tom rausch**



# small engagements

Today, make it a point to ask three members of your team for their advice on an issue of significance. Start with a very simple, “I need your help with something..” and then listen intently, take notes, clarify what you heard and thank them for their thoughts. Close the loop by acting on their input in some way, large or small. Whether you get a torrent or a trickle of information in response to your inquiries, you’ll learn something valuable from the experience -- either you have an open and “willing to share” culture or a “why’s he asking me this?” environment that needs to be addressed. Your own willingness to be vulnerable in asking for advice -- an admission that you don’t have all the answers -- will enrich an already strong culture while helping to mend one that suffers from a lack of trust.

**steven brown**



# small engagements

The smallest action with the biggest impact on engagement is getting into the habit of checking your alignment. Take a minute before each action and check - is my action aligned with my personal priorities, is it aligned with my team goals? is it aligned with my organization? Is what I am about to do aligned with what I say? We know that to engage others requires listening yet how often do we decide to skip that step “just this once” and soon trust is broken and engagement drops. To build trust and earn respect ensure that each action, each engagement, each interaction aligns with your intent.

**sharon quarrington**



# small engagements

I thought I might add an appropriate article from my WordPress Blog, but “no” (not small). However, I’ve been carrying a reaction (a thought) in my head for several days. A Euro expert connection re EE offered up the idea the other day that “Pride” is the most important element for EE. I have seen such a concept promoted on the factory floors with a large sign in one of the world’s foremost aviation manufacturere (late 1960s), and I always thought it was good. Yes, “Pride in one’s workmanship is good”, but one’s pride might also get in the way when giving and receiving during important conversations. And that got me thinking back to another “old” experience which was resurrected recently (1990s) for a “new” Forward Plan. It was a motto I cut my teeth on (1940s) and was, in fact, a Standard for the World: “Craftmanship a Creed, and Accuracy a Law.” This motto guided GM’s Cadillac Motor Car Division through many years. And, the place where I saw it once again (adopted) was at Ford Motor (and Mazda) Research and Engineering.

**william j legray**





# small engagements

For 2013, I'm following my heart and leaving the Welsh Government where I have worked for a lucky 13 years and will be going freelance, pursuing my passion to involve staff members and stakeholders in shaping developments within their organisations and working with organisations to best manage their change.

**alex clapson**



# small engagements

Well, it's a small idea, but will be a huge paradigm shift. We are going from an employee of the quarter program to creating a culture of recognition. We know that recognition needs to happen on a daily, (not quarterly) basis and it must happen at all levels. We also know the importance of executive champions (not sponsors) to help us drive this new way of life. We have an amazing company but know that this new process will take a lot of education not just for executives, but all employees across the organization.

**karen prechtel**



# small engagements

Find something to appreciate everyday! While it sounds simple, it also means noticing very specific things employees are doing and being very specific in your appreciation. Just saying “Thanks” or “Thank you!” or “Great job” is not enough. For example: “Jean, thank you so much for having such a thought provoking agenda set for the meeting today!” “Eric, when I asked for your input on my email you pushed back on two approaches I was going to take. Thank you so much for your valuable feedback and caring enough to push back. Your feedback helped me re-think my approach and made it so much better!”

**kellce carrier**



# small engagements

One thing that has been extremely successful for me with new team members or new teams, is to start almost every conversation or one-on-one meeting with, “how do you know when you are having a good day?” If the person can answer the question in a meaningful way, I find I can recognize their good days and say “thanks.” If the person cannot answer this question well, we have a wonderful beginning point for an engaging relationship where we get to define the good and the not so good, then find ways to recognize and reward the behaviors and outputs we both agree are good.

**john hallonquist**



# small engagements

Explain the why to employees - the rationale behind decisions of the future, the past and the present.

The future: Why are we going in this direction? Why have some future initiatives been prioritized over others?

The past: Why have decisions been made the way they've been made? Why haven't goals been met?

The present: Why does the organization exist (purpose)? Why is each employee's contribution important?

**emily saunders**



# small engagements

A participant on a recent leadership program shared this aphorism (probably familiar to this group)...”giving recognition is like showering. You need to do it every day or you’ll start to stink!”

**mark schenk**



# small engagements

Be a REAL friend.

**johan prinsloo**



# small engagements

Take the penny challenge - as a leadership team set aside one day to track positive feedback. Each member of the team comes to work with ten pennies in one pocket. Each time he or she offers positive feedback to someone during the day move a penny to the other pocket. At the end of the day record which pocket had the most pennies. Debrief with the leadership team. Repeat once a month to begin developing the habit of providing positive feedback. In our work we find that most leaders think they give lots of positive feedback while the people they lead report just the opposite.

**rick stamm**





# small engagements

Make it personal. Take the time to listen and understand what inspires your employees.

**cord himelstein**



# small engagements

The smallest and least expensive action to take to engage with a colleague, subordinate or manager is to say “thank you”. They may not have done anything specific; just take the time to consider the difference that they have made to you or others or the organisation and give them a heartfelt thank you. Thank you David - you have provided an amazing opportunity for people to connect from around the globe for a purpose that is positive and uplifting. You truly make a difference to me and the 5,500 + subscribers to the Employee Engagement Network. Simple action - profound result!

**shirley farrell**



# small engagements

S - Start with talking about engagement why its important and what are the observable signs that could suggest someone is moving into the disengaged zone (Victim thinking, nothing within my control, negative self talk, etc).

M - Measure your own engagement - it starts with you, how are you showing up - if you are not engaged chances are your staff will not be!

A - Action behaviors that maintain or enhance your engagement (lots of good information from positive psychology).

L - Look beyond what you do to why you do it. Connect with your organizational purpose or your personal values.

L - Let others in, engagement breeds engagement, spread the word, be a helping presence with others!

**jennifer o'halloran**



# small engagements

Help each and every employee understand their impact on gaining and retaining customers. Give them their line of sight, the three or so steps that each of us have to customers, to help them understand the meaning of their role and how important what they do is to the success of the team, department and organization.

**anil saxena**



# small engagements

My small idea, ask:

What would reignite your passion?

What would increase your engagement on this team, project, etc?

As your leader, how can I support your engagement?

When were you most engaged and why?

What prevents you from being fully engaged?

What do you hope to accomplish this year?

How can I be more supportive of your goals?

**susan stamm**



# small engagements

My small contribution for employee engagement is “ go outside the norm and engage with your average and low performing employees. Yes, the ones that you have almost given up on. Pull those employees to the side and give them one gold nugget of appreciation and watch the productivity take a turn for the best!! Most times the average and the lowest get overlooked, when in fact they sometimes need engagement the most.

**joi johnson**



# small engagements

Cultural sensitivity and a warm welcome! Often when new employees join an organization, much is done on the orientation and training front, but not enough on understanding the individual nature of the new employee, his/her cultural sensitivities, introversion/ extraversion, especially in a multi-cultural organization with strong bias towards specific ethnic composition of staff. Someone in the organization should be deputed to take the new person under his/her wing until the new employee settles in. All too often, the reserved/shy (especially young, 'on first job' kind of employees) have a hard time in a large organization., and it makes engagement with the job and organization very difficult.

**kumud sengupta**



# small engagements

Ask for feedback, then take action!

**jasbindar singh**





# small engagements

Simply inform: By letting your team know the results, they will engage in the outcome of them. In a lot of settings, that can be enough, no orders, no directions, just display the results and let the team think and act on their own.

**frode heimen**



# small engagements

Communicate respectfully.

**jasbindar singh**



# small engagements

Perceptiveness and empathy. The popularity that a manager attains in an organisation is dependent solely on how successfully he has engaged his team, time and again for different projects and at different times. That is why some managers are winners and others are not. Such managers also become the preferred 'blue-eyed-boys' of the top management. In 2013, let's take a vow that we would not highlight the gaps our team mates display as these winning managers don't, and instead work on the potential strengths of our team mates. Only perceptive managers can do this. Let's also take another simple step to build on that strength by hand-holding them and showing them the way. And to top it all, we decide to empathise with every single crisis (small or big) and jointly find a solution.

**dhruva trivedy**



# small engagements

Listen first and then act. I know this is common sense stuff but as I picked up on my Twitter travels recently: common sense is a bit like deodorant. Those in most need rarely apply it.  
It really amused me.

**lisa sibley**



# small engagements

Honour self and others!

**jasbindar singh**



# small engagements

Smile. Have fun.

**kevin sheridan**



# small engagements

Ask “what can I do to help you?” or “what can I do to help you be successful?”

**ray baumruk**



# small engagements

Stay inspired which in turn can inspire others.

## jasbindar singh





# small engagements

Clear purpose aligned to actions. Areas of focus not goals. Drive behaviours (which are lead indicators) not measures (which are lag).

**sara tharakan**



# small engagements

Engagement becomes more than a catch-phrase, when top leadership says “good morning” and uses your name, and really connects. Leaders: engage your “face” memory more often, and you will notice a culture-changing-ripple-effect over time.

**maggie chicoine**



# small engagements

Be genuine and authentic in your dealings with others. Leave the different masks and egos at the front door and remember that we're all human, we have faults, we make mistakes, let's learn and move on. Let's work together to make things better for everyone as opposed to only the benefit of a select few.

**shereen qutob-cabral**



# small engagements

Just add spice. Focus yourself or your team on a small daily result. Ensure that what you do is focused on what you want to achieve not just numerous activities that scream for attention. The best daily result has a compelling narrative feel about it that includes the why of the work. I start my day off with a small Spice Girl's number by asking myself and others: "so tell me what you want, what you really really want. I'll tell you what I want, what I really really want..."

**david zinger**



# small engagements

This book was written by over 50 members of the Employee Engagement Network. John Junson designed the book, cover and cartoon. David Zinger hosted the development of the book. The network has over 5600 members. We are an eclectic group of people with a wide range of interests in employee engagement. Visit us at [www.employeeengagement.ning.com](http://www.employeeengagement.ning.com).



David Zinger is a global expert on employee engagement. He has been applying his unique pyramid of employee engagement to make small and significant strides to increase employee engagement for individuals and organizations.

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