



Using Big Data to Get Big Results

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Did you know that 51% of today's U.S. workforce is not engaged? When employees are engaged, businesses realize a 41% reduction in absenteeism and a 17% increase in productivity. Turnover is also much lower – anywhere from 24%-59% lower.¹

Experts and studies show there is a direct correlation between employee engagement and organizational profitability and performance. According to Gallup, “Engaged employees are more present and productive; they are more attuned to the needs of customers....When taken together, the behaviors of highly engaged business units result in 21% greater profitability... and achieve a 10% increase in customer metrics and a 20% increase in sales.”¹

So, what can you do to increase your employee engagement and, ultimately, your bottom line? One way is to use and share data in the form of direct feedback from surveys, and by providing data to managers/employees that gives them the tools they need to do their job better and, thus, improve guest satisfaction.

In April 2017, UniFocus held a Partners Conference to gain insight into the evolving hospitality industry. Through discussions on managing multiple generations, the complexities of schedules and laws, and how technology is changing the industry, some of their insights into using data to improve employee engagement emerged.

The Impact of Feedback

Studies have shown that when employees receive consistent feedback, especially about their strengths, they are more engaged. And, it begins with collecting feedback more frequently. The day of the annual performance review is

long gone. When done in the right way, tracking, analyzing, and sharing employee performance metrics can be beneficial for both you and your staff, as the ability to analyze real-time information, boil it down into performance data, and then provide employees with reports from that data is very powerful. Applying data analytics to your employees' performance also helps you identify and acknowledge not only the top performers, but the struggling or unhappy workers, as well. If you want your team to be more engaged, you have to find out what motivates them and identify their main engagement drivers. In other words, collect the data, analyze the data, and then implement a measurable strategy.

Several partners at the conference made the point that getting feedback from employees is crucial because managers have to manage the needs of the operation with the needs of these employees. Being able to identify an employee's preferences in regards to time off and their work-life balance, allows them to better match employees' labor needs to the organization's needs for providing quality service.

One partner at the conference noted that he wants to know how employees are doing, hundreds of times in a year. “We believe having that information enables our HR teams to get to pockets of issues more quickly. We don't want to use the information to isolate a specific issue with a specific person; we want to know where systemically we have a challenge. We think the only way we can get there in a timely way is to get more feedback, more quickly.”

Empowering With Data

Another powerful component of increased employee engagement revolves around getting actionable data into the hands of employees.

¹Gallup, State of the American Workplace, 2017

Providing employees with data to do their job better is very motivating. According to another partner, the key to growth within the organization lies in empowering team members with data to make decisions on their own and then providing opportunities for them to lead projects. This allows them to grow from their failures and successes. Another partner agreed saying, “Information is power and our young leaders know and

getting better data in front of our managers so they can make better decisions.”

One company integrated all their systems and wrapped the data around their financial metrics. Then they put that information into the hands of their managers. Sharing that data meant that their managers had better optics into making sure they had the right number of people serving the right number of guests at the right time.



“There’s also a concentrated effort on the HR side encouraging employees to take a more proactive role in managing their own identity from a benefit standpoint. Things such as online interactivity for benefits, enrollment, transparency in benefit accruals and allowing employees to get payroll information online and not have to wait for a paystub, are some of the ways to further empower employees,” added another partner.

understand that. They want access to the same information as the most senior levels so they can play as well. We have to do a better job of

As shown by studies and personal accounts from industry executives, collecting and dispersing data can have a huge impact on employee engagement. Increased employee engagement means higher customer satisfaction scores, and ultimately an overall increase in your bottom line!

About the Author

Barry Kaplan, Sr. Vice President of Human Resources and Organizational Development at UniFocus. Barry has overseen UniFocus’ Human Resources and Organizational Development activities since joining the company in 2011, bringing 25 years of leadership experience.

Barry previously worked as director of training with the Heymann Group before leaving to lead HR and OD improvement activities in the Americas, Europe, Asia and Australia. During his absence, he also worked at Bowstreet Inc., and Groove networks prior to managing the Global Training Development efforts at Symantec.

An eight-year veteran of the U.S. Navy, and winner of the prestigious Navy Achievement Medal, Barry received his M.A. in Adult Learning/Continuing Education from the University of Phoenix and is a member of the Society for Human Resource Management.



Case Study:

Real Results

Best Western Hotels & Resorts has successfully beta-tested UniFocus' Pulse Survey solution in a group of its North American hotels to understand the impact of hotel employee engagement on guest satisfaction. Working collaboratively with a group of their independently owned and operated hotels, they gained a valuable new metric to quantify the value of hotel employee engagement. That benefit became clear when UniFocus shared aggregated summarized survey results that Best Western was able to compare with brand-level guest satisfaction data. The results revealed a 0.4 correlation between hotel employee engagement index scores and guests' intent to recommend the hotel to other travelers. Therefore, a 10-percent increase in engagement could reasonably result in a four-percent increase in intent to recommend, generating two to three additional rooms per night. Based on average occupancy rates and ADR at the participating hotels, that would translate into an additional \$70-\$100k in annual room revenue.

“We are constantly striving to increase engagement because we know that a motivated, satisfied workforce is essential to delivering excellent guest service. UniFocus' Pulse Survey gives us an important tool to measure that engagement,” said Ron Pohl, Best Western

Hotels & Resorts' Senior Vice President and Chief Operations Officer. ” tProjections based on results of our first Pulse Survey have been enlightening and we anticipate that further analysis will corroborate these findings.”

In addition, UniFocus partnered directly with participating hotels to provide them individual results. Each hotel received a detailed report showing its unique strengths and opportunity areas, in addition to an action planning tool to help plan, track, and improve employee engagement. Best Western Hotels & Resorts has made the opportunity to work with UniFocus available to all Best Western properties in North America to help each hotel improve guest satisfaction results. Unobtrusive Pulse Surveys track engagement throughout the year, giving organizations instant insight into their employees' perceptions that directly impact the guest experience. After extensive research, UniFocus has formulated a short pulse survey for staff to express opinions, enabling management to get to the heart of their concerns. Brief surveys conducted via mobile app are convenient and quick for employees, encouraging better response rates. Managers can compare results against company, property, division, or department averages and identify those departments that need immediate attention.