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**SPECIAL EDITION:  
Best Global Practices in Internal OD**



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*Letter from the Editor:*

# Best Global Practices in Internal Organization Development

*by Thiet (Ted) K. Nguyen, Johnson & Johnson*

You are holding the first of a three-volume set of the global Special Edition of the O.D. Journal, which represents the collaborative labor of love (and sweat) of an all-volunteer team of 105 practitioners worldwide who have invested thousands of hours during the last year to bring this publication from concept to reality. This is the first Special Edition of its kind in the 39-year history of the O.D. Institute, and it is our gift to the global O.D. community. None of the individuals who contributed to this effort is a professional editor or proofreader, and all became actively engaged because of their passion and burning commitment to enhance the capabilities and reputation of our profession. Collectively, we share the common goal of advancing the field of organization development by strengthening the internal body of practice literature.

Two distinct and dedicated groups of professionals worked side by side to bring this Special Edition to life. The first group, a Peer Review Board, consisted of Senior Human Resources and Organization Development executives from 70 corporations worldwide who anonymously reviewed the content of submissions with 21 highly credentialed external consultants. Once the Peer Review Board determined that papers were ready for editing, the second group, a Special Edition project team of 14 dedicated O.D. professionals, managed all processes from design to execution. Under challenging circumstances, both teams have done their utmost to create the highest quality publication for you, our professional colleagues, and yet, we must ask that you forgive us for any errors you may discover as you read these articles. It is the spirit of worldwide collaboration that enriches the value of this global Special Edition.

This Special Edition will benefit the H.R./O.D. community in several ways:

1. **Academic community** – The academic community will find the content of these contributions of value to raise its awareness of current best internal practices. Program directors can be informed to strengthen their curriculums and research directions. Graduate students may use this edition as they prepare to enter the O.D. profession and compete for opportunities in the global marketplace.
2. **Current practitioners** – Both internal and external practitioners can use this knowledge to guide their practice areas, enhance their skills, and strengthen their core competencies, by learning from other O.D. professionals.
3. **Our clients and business partners** – Potential and existing clients can be better informed of the capabilities O.D. professional can bring to enhance employee engagement and organizational growth and vitality.

The genesis of this Special Edition was the May 2006 O.D. Institute Annual Conference during which participants discussed the need to encourage internal practitioners to share their stories in the O.D. Journal. During the conference I was extended the “invitation” to serve as Editor of a proposed Special Edition on “Best Internal O.D. Practices,” in part because of my role as Past Chair of the Global Committee on the Future of O.D. and as President of the New Jersey O.D. Community since 1998. My existing networks allowed me to quickly reach out to internal practitioners globally.

The results of this outreach effort have been overwhelming. Over the last 12 months we received about 100 manuscripts from internal practitioners on every continent (except Antarctica). This tremendous response led us to conclude the best way to share the breadth and depth of this work would be in three volumes: May, August and November 2007.

As the project team reviewed and edited each manuscript, its respect for diversity and commitment to making this an inclusive effort drove us to preserve the original voice, style, and intent of every author knowing that many are not native English speakers. The power and foundation for this work comes from this commitment to diversity and inclusion, which superceded strict scholarly conformance.

Content like this has never been captured or disseminated because internal practitioners tend not to have the luxury of time to write, and few are professional writers. This is the first time many of these authors took the time to document their work, secure the support of their company to release the information, and share their internal efforts with all who are interested. We applaud all our authors for their trust in us, and their willingness to provide working papers without the benefit of professional editors. What readers will experience in this global Special Edition is truly the authentic voices of internal practitioners worldwide who share their stories from a place of caring and eagerness to advance the field of organization development.

While this series is titled a best internal O.D. practice edition, no one associated with its production has judged or evaluated "a best global practice". Rather, authors were encouraged to share what they perceived to be a best practice within their organization, whether that organization is a start-up company in India, a non-profit organization in the USA, an energy company in Africa, or a hi-tech company in China. We also chose not to judge whether an article fits the definition of organization development, since there are variations among the definitions of O.D. We recognized, too, that O.D. is practiced differently across geographies, countries, sectors, industries, organizations, groups and contexts.

To share additional insights into their workplaces, many authors have generously provided a one-page reflection outlining their working environment, the benefits of the intervention as described in their paper, and finally, to share their take on the experience. In some articles, the reflection page includes one or two brief testimonials from their business partners, internal clients, and/or others who were directly affected by the interventions.

Look for the next volume of this global Special Edition in August 2007 when we plan to share another 15 papers with you. The November 2007 edition will contain 30 papers. All tolled, you will have the opportunity to read a total of 75 best global practice papers. We hope you will enjoy reading this global Special Edition, and we welcome your feedback (tnguye19@corus.jnj.com). Sharing your input is the most effective way to support our community and to help us continually improve. **Thank you.**

Ted Nguyen  
New Brunswick, New Jersey  
April 2007

# Employee Engagement: Boosting Productivity in Turbulent Times

*Frank Catteeuw, Johnson & Johnson*

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*James Vonderhorst, Johnson & Johnson*

## Abstract

Like most companies in the healthcare industry, Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical Research & Development, L.L.C. (J&JPRD) faces the commensurate challenges of growing its business in an increasingly competitive marketplace while discovering and developing innovative new medicines. Understanding that internal and external change impacts productivity, J&J PRD's Global Organizational Development (OD) team identified employee engagement as an important tool to ensure long-term growth and success.

Following both internal and external research, the OD team partnered with business leaders and Human Resource Generalists to develop and implement a global employee engagement model and strategy. At the time this model and strategy was developed and implemented, it was unclear what the model and strategy would do to, or for the organization's business reality of ongoing change. Although just recently implemented, the anecdotal evidence shows promise. This article concludes with suggestions for OD professionals to consider when planning a similar initiative in their organization.

## Introduction

Even in prosperous times, keeping a workforce engaged, positive, and productive can challenge any well-managed organization. However, when the competitive business climate buffets an organization for any number of reasons, some of which can be controlled, some of which cannot, engaging employees and boosting productivity becomes more difficult. At the same time, these tasks are even more mission-critical.

At Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical Research & Development, L.L.C. (J&JPRD), the concept of boosting productivity in an increasingly competitive business environment came into focus about two years ago, as the competitive

landscape of the pharmaceutical industry became as fierce as any in the global marketplace. J&J PRD is headquartered in Raritan, NJ, and has nine sites throughout Europe and the U.S. which employ approximately 3,500 professionals from discovery research through drug development across a variety of therapeutic areas. Major therapeutic areas of focus include Internal Medicine (metabolic disorders) and Central Nervous System (CNS) disorders.

The pharmaceutical industry has been the subject of news headlines, detailing the regulatory, pricing and safety pressures of today's global marketplace. At the same time, there has been an increased focus on greater productivity and innovation per dollar in R&D investments. Additionally, there were internal organizational changes that required functional groups to collaborate across J&J enterprises with new and different goals. New leadership was also delivering clear expectations around accountabilities and efficiencies that would deliver innovative drugs to the marketplace, responding to unmet medical needs – the most important measure of pharmaceutical industry competitiveness.

While those pressures mounted, results of an internal annual company-wide survey completed in late 2005 confirmed that employees were feeling the results of change. This annual, confidential, web-based, 78-question survey measures how well the organization is "living up" to its core values, such as commitment to customers, ethical decision-making and employee support. Results are compared to a "benchmark" target such as prior year results. Regression analysis showed a decrease in ratings for three subcategories of data that directly impact our internal measure of employee engagement; "Job Satisfaction," "Valuing People" and "Collaboration and Trust." Additionally, in a separate internal research study focusing on building a "culture of innovation," we found similar drivers of employee engagement. These results implied that building a culture of innovation is not achievable without an engaged workforce.

## The Call to Action

The “call to action,” and business case was clear. In re-thinking employee engagement, the Organizational Development team needed to boost the critical link between engagement and business results. In this case, keeping our eye on the prize -- productivity -- was critical. New products flow from innovation. In our case, without engaged scientists, we could continue to expect limited new ideas and products in the pipeline.

## Foundational Engagement Research

For external data that clearly demonstrates the value of an engaged workforce, we did extensive research and turned to two primary sources, **Gallup** and the **Corporate Leadership Council**.

In the early 1990s the **Gallup** Organization started their research on engagement and productivity. Based on several hundred focus group discussions, the Gallup researchers developed a survey they administered to over one million employees and 80,000 managers worldwide. This resulted in the creation of 12 items<sup>1</sup>, which have since formed the basis of the Gallup Q12 “Employee Engagement Index.” In 2003, the **Gallup Management Journal**<sup>2</sup> released the results of a global follow-up study on engagement. Based on a representative survey sample of 1,000 adults who completed the engagement index, it found that 17% of employees in organizations are actively disengaged. Another 54% of employees are not engaged, i.e., on “autopilot,” and only 29% of the workforce is truly engaged (with employees who feel profound connection to their employer, leader and team). Gallup estimates that actively disengaged workers cost US business approximately \$300 billion a year in low productivity – two different calculations show the same figures: (1) the total salary loss (of unengaged employees) based on the \$30,000 per year US average salary for adults who are 18 years old or older; (2) the anticipated productivity gain based on an estimate of 3.41% increase in output for each of the currently disengaged employees.

The Corporate Leadership Council<sup>3</sup> confirms the above data in similar research. Based on a survey taken of more than 50,000 employees at 59 global organizations (10 industries, 27 countries) in 2004, researchers identified the highest employee engagement impact drivers. They used these drivers to categorize employees as “True Believers,” who demonstrate very strong commitment, “Disaffected” employees, who are actively opposed to someone or something in their organization (and the middle group of employees (“Agnostics”), who are modestly committed. From this 2004 employee engagement survey, another picture is revealed. Engaging organizations (24% “true believers” and 5% “disengaged”) employ 15.8% of employees showing “discretionary efforts” and 42.9% of employees who want to stay in the company. On the

flip side, the disengaging organization (3% “true believers” and 17% “disengaged”) had just 3% of employees showing “discretionary efforts” and 15.3% of employees who want to stay in the company.

The numbers from both resources tell a compelling story. We, as OD practitioners could not disregard this data, especially in today’s challenging and changing times. We heard our company’s call to action to increase R&D productivity, and found enough evidence that employee engagement is the #1 lever. With the support of our leadership, we aligned to our business strategy, and agreed that our mission for 2006–2007 was to hone in on ways to help company supervisors and managers better engage the workforce. We started using “Employee Engagement” as the umbrella for all our initiatives, processes and communication.

## Building the Employee Engagement Strategy: Defining Engagement

After much collaboration and work among our Core Employee Engagement Team, HR generalists and business leaders, we defined employee engagement for ourselves:

*“Engagement is the degree to which employees are **satisfied** with their jobs, feel **valued**, and experience **collaboration** and **trust**. Engaged employees will **stay** with the company **longer**, and continually find smarter, more effective ways to **add value** to the organization. The end result is a high-performing company where people are **flourishing** and **productivity** is increased and sustained.”*

We found an example of this as we observed Compound Development Team members focusing on a specific drug that was receiving positive feedback from the Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Senior Management gave them great recognition and they were intrinsically satisfied with supporting a critical patient population. As satisfaction went up, they became more engaged in finding ways to accelerate their timelines, resulting in successful FDA approval.



**Figure 1:** The house as a metaphor for employee engagement.

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To visualize our engagement strategy approach, we used the framework of a simple house (see related graphic). As the foundation lies two key roles managers and supervisors need to execute in order to boost employee engagement:

- **Role #1:** Connecting Employees with the Organization: providing information about the company direction and how the employee’s effort contributes to the success of the organization.
- **Role #2:** Guiding Employees’ Work and Performance: providing fair and accurate feedback and helping employees find solutions to job challenges.

The pillars that bear the weight of the roof are the three key drivers identified earlier in this article through our employee Credo surveys: job satisfaction, valuing people, and collaboration and trust. Those dual roles, when combined with the pillars from our Credo survey, provide the critical support for our roof – employee engagement, which in turn leads to a boost in R&D productivity. It is a simple design, and it is working within J&JPRD.

Creating the strategy to drive engagement meant considering multiple approaches. First and foremost, it required that we be flexible, resilient and open to changes going on within the business and around us. We started in one direction, then, working with our top HR executive, determined that boosting engagement, especially in a difficult business environment, should not be viewed as just “another HR initiative.” (It must deliver positive impact for both the business and the individual employees, every day, every year. It must be part of an organization’s fabric and culture.)

How did we create our strategy? Our framework comes from additional research done by the Corporate Leadership Council, which supplied us with their 2005 research paper, “Managing for High Performance and Retention.”<sup>4</sup> This report, based on extensive analysis of data from more than 90,000 employees in 135 organizations from around the world, addresses the questions, “Why do employees succeed or fail on the job?” and “What should line managers do to maximize employee performance and retention?” As a conclusion, the paper presents several imperatives for leaders to maximize employee engagement, clustered into two major leader roles. From the CLC research, we chose this “dual leadership role” because it resonated with our situation, and helped us to make a link to concrete, tangible actions.

We started with this external research, and we added the “internal reality” derived from our Credo employee surveys. Keeping it simple was critical. The more we could integrate engagement-building into existing processes, such as mid-year reviews, goal setting, department meetings, employee on boarding, etc., the more palatable it would be with managers and leaders.

### Making the Engagement Strategy Practical

We created an actions menu for each of the two engagement roles and identified existing and new tools, processes and training. An engagement Intranet portal was developed for easy access to all of the materials. In order to help the selection and prioritization process we clustered the actions into focus areas, which resonate to business leaders (see Tables below).

Engagement Focus Areas	Sample Tools / Processes / Training
<b>STRATEGY: Facilitate employee understanding of company/departmental vision and strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ R&amp;D Operating Model Education</li> <li>➤ Employee Focus Groups</li> <li>➤ Town Hall Sessions</li> <li>➤ Strategic Planning Session</li> </ul>
<b>CREDO: Focus on Credo results (including Credo engagement index)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Employee Focus Groups</li> <li>➤ Employee Pulse Checks</li> <li>➤ Credo Action Planning Process</li> </ul>
<b>REWARDS AND RECOGNITION: Use rewards and recognition to motivate employees and encourage high performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Motivation Tools</li> <li>➤ Celebration Events</li> <li>➤ Encore Program</li> </ul>
<b>INNOVATION: Create atmosphere that supports innovative thinking and actively solicit employee ideas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Culture of Innovation Resources</li> <li>➤ Employee Pulse Checks</li> <li>➤ Employee Focus Groups</li> <li>➤ Town Hall Sessions</li> </ul>
<b>CAREER DEVELOPMENT: Partner with employees in career development planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Mentoring</li> <li>➤ Manager as Career Coach</li> <li>➤ Focus on Growth</li> </ul>
<b>TEAM PERFORMANCE: Focus teams on high performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Team Toolkit</li> <li>➤ Culture of Innovation Resources</li> <li>➤ Leader Guidebook on Engagement</li> </ul>

**Table 1:** Management Role #1: Connecting employees with the organization.

©2006 Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical Research & Development, L.L.C.

Engagement Focus Areas	Sample Tools / Processes / Training
<b>COMMUNICATION:</b> Consistently provide relevant and timely information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Employee Focus Groups</li> <li>➤ Leader Guidebook on Engagement</li> <li>➤ Town Hall Sessions</li> </ul>
<b>CHECK-INS:</b> Conduct regular check-ins (formally and informally) with employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Delivering Effective Feedback</li> <li>➤ Employee Pulse Checks</li> <li>➤ One on Ones with Employees</li> </ul>
<b>GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:</b> Define clear goals and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ GLP</li> <li>➤ PDM Tools and Resources</li> <li>➤ Smart Goals and Objectives</li> </ul>
<b>COACHING:</b> Coach employees on development and job-related competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Focus on Growth</li> <li>➤ Coaching Tools</li> <li>➤ Manager as Career Coach</li> </ul>
<b>DIVERSITY:</b> Acknowledge and value employee differences in thought, style, etc...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Diversity</li> <li>➤ Retention Toolkit</li> </ul>
<b>RETENTION:</b> Invest time and efforts in retaining key employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ One on Ones with Employees</li> </ul>

**Table 2:** Management Role #2: Guiding employees' work and performance.

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## Engagement and Change

With a keen awareness that employee engagement would never occur in a vacuum, our objective remained linking any engagement strategy to change.

In our strategy, what leaders do, and do not do to engage employees is determined by which of the four "stages of change" (endure, emerge, embrace and excel) a team happens to be in. Three of these stages are derived from William Bridges well-known change model described in the book, 'Managing Transitions'<sup>5</sup> which explains the psychological phases people go through when confronted with transition. We added the fourth phase, "Excel," as the sustainable phase of full engagement.



**Figure 2:** Managing the human side of change.

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In the context of engagement and change, it is essential to consider the critical questions employees have on their minds in each phase, such as:

- **Endure:** Why the change? Will I have a job tomorrow?
- **Emerge:** Will I get involved in building the future organization? Can I try new ideas?
- **Embrace:** How will successes be made visible? How will I know that I am doing a good job?
- **Excel:** How can I support the growth and innovation of the organization? What are the next steps in my career development?

Based on a diagnosis of where a team is on the change continuum, leaders must determine and implement the right action at the right moment. For example it is advantageous to select activities that build high-performing teams in the "Excel" stage rather than during the "Endure" period, where focusing on short-term goals and providing timely information are more appropriate. Interestingly, many of the leaders' actions that will "engage" employees are the same actions leaders would take to lead employees through change. Because of this, change periods are when one actually wants to focus even more on engagement activities, not less (and expressed by the manager above who responds, "I do not have time.")

## Implementation

We are using what we call a "soft implementation" mode which means, in J&J that we are educating our HR generalists, arming them with what they need to work one-on-one with business partners. Based on business needs, actual implementations will vary, but in general, deploying this engagement strategy is simple. We ask each supervisor and manager to consult with his or her HR generalist on the following:

1. Determine the phase of change your team is experiencing. (As a diagnostic support, we developed a checklist of typical behaviors and reactions for each phase).
2. Review the action menu under the two critical management roles and select the appropriate focus area based on the identified phase of change
3. Choose one or two items that you will commit to from each "actions menu." This does not require you to add a new action or take a new initiative. You can utilize ongoing activities, such as mid-year or performance reviews – if you do, think about doing them differently with a clear focus on engagement.

We ask leaders to create an action plan that identifies accountabilities and time frames, and can be integrated with other ongoing initiatives. As a support to the implementation process, we developed an engagement template to document the action plan. Once implementation began, we asked them to follow-up and measure outcomes.

The approach is not to have HR serve in the role of “law enforcement” or record keeper; rather, as consultant/coach and facilitator.

### Measuring Success: Early Indicators

Strategy implementation was our primary focus throughout the year. We have collected preliminary baseline data on some key indicators and anecdotal feedback on the results. Going forward, baseline data will include the annual employee survey, which asks questions on engagement, retention numbers, and data collected at the time a person leaves the company. These three “metrics” will be analyzed in 2007.

Along with the data mentioned above, we are also tracking “soft” measures that have given us a pulse on movement of our strategy. We have held several “check-in” meetings with HR colleagues, who have reported on the engagement action plans developed by their business leaders. The percentage of completed plans is approximately 90% of all business leaders. There are many examples of specific actions that we attribute to our engagement strategy such as:

- All Directors and VP’s (approximately 600 in total) are attending leadership sessions hosted by members of the Board and of the business. The state of the business and company direction is being discussed, so leaders can identify barriers and provide input, as well as carry the message back to their organizations through similar communication sessions with their employees.
- Specific questions regarding the level of engagement have been added and utilized in the mid-year review process.
- One organization implemented “change agent” workshops for select employees to champion engagement activities.

Aside from the examples above, we know that the research we reviewed reveals that managers and supervisors are the key levers of engagement. It is about what leaders do every day. In our working definition of “inspirational leadership”, leaders must share their **passion** and **vision**, and encourage confidence, trust and loyalty. They must be aware of not just what they do but how they do it. Our strategy focuses on creating a **culture** that motivates employees to want to do their best work, with leaders making a **two-way connection** with direct

reports on **daily** (s during every phase of the organizational lifecycle – in times of change or stability.

### Assessing Leadership

How will we assess inspirational leadership? Our plans are to first offer skill building that will train managers and supervisors on the critical competencies described in our working definition above. After that, we will track progress via performance reviews and also the hard metrics such as their Credo results.

Of course, the ultimate measure, although indirect, is the quantity and quality of new products in our pipeline. This will be our true success indicator.

### Employee Engagement Considerations

Employee engagement is an ongoing process, not an end itself. It needs to become part of the company culture. As such, you can expect stumbling blocks along the way. Even the word engagement can be problematic. We had some managers balk just when they heard the word “engagement.” In their minds, it was just another Human Resources cheerleading exercise. While we continue to overcome these obstacles, we are firm in our commitment to create an inspirational leadership culture in which employee engagement occurs on a consistent basis day after day.

Employee engagement must become a part of how everyone does their jobs every day. It’s neither a project nor another HR initiative.

Another impediment can be communications, especially when it comes to defining key terms, including the two primary issues of productivity and employee engagement. As noted, productivity is not about longer hours; it is about working smarter, focusing more on innovation. In this case, innovation is about employees taking the initiative themselves...experimenting with new ideas, focusing, and going for it!

### Conclusion

Our search for the best engagement strategy and our discussions with HR generalists and business leaders revealed that our leaders want clarity, guidance and choices. We created that through a definition of employee engagement and a framework that now resonates with our leaders. We provided both guidance and focus through the description of the “dual role” for leaders. This model is appreciated because roles are straightforward and clear. The action list we proposed (our “actions menus”) creates flexibility and allows leaders to be selective and prioritize what’s important and relevant to them and their business. In this sense our approach and strategy are not so prescriptive that people feel constrained

by OD or HR is telling them they have to do this or that to succeed.

Finally, we think a clear success factor is that we referred to a number of existing tools and processes; there is little need to reinvent the wheel. Many of the actions within our strategy are done every day, so it was really just a matter of putting it all into focus/perspective, and adding the timing (the right action at the right time) factor.

Our employee engagement strategy works best when managers and supervisors remember two critical concepts: They must connect their people to the organization, and keep them informed. Second, they must help their people with their jobs; giving them honest feedback and helping them understand their role, and their performance, both strengths and weaknesses.

In the end, our employee engagement strategy helps leaders understand that employee engagement and inspirational leadership need to be embedded in everything they do. If your strategy offers that message and delivers on it, productivity measures will surely increase.

Finally, by linking engagement to change, we increase the sense of urgency and the call to action with regard to employee engagement. It helps us to explain to leaders that they have to focus on the right action at the right moment, starting today.

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## Authors' Reflections

Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical Research & Development (J&JPRD), L.L.C., is headquartered in Raritan, New Jersey, and has nine sites throughout Europe and the U.S. employing approximately 3,500 professionals from discovery research through drug development in a variety of therapeutic areas. The OD Team at J&J PRD consists of seven specialists who focus on Organization (and Employee) processes as well as OD client support. The team reports into the Vice-President, HR, a member of the Board. The major processes the OD team supports are the global Performance & Development Management process, Talent Management and Leadership Development processes, and Managing Change and Transition, among others. Through close partnerships with the HR Generalists, OD provides a complete package of HR services and leads various projects that drive the needs of the business: team development, change projects, competency management initiatives and organization design work. The topic of employee engagement became our "umbrella" initiative crossing over all of our other process and client offerings.

In early 2006, members from the OD team, in partnership with the HR Generalists, formed a project team to develop and implement a global employee engagement framework and strategy that would increase employee productivity and also flex to the organization's business reality of ongoing change.

The team was faced with a number of challenges: a fiercely competitive industry that creates extreme pressure to work harder and longer with a focus on the "end product" versus "people issues"; new leadership that had stronger expectations around accountabilities and efficiencies; changes in organizational structure to better support the business direction but was causing confusion and the feeling of "loss"; and the results of an annual company-wide survey that indicated that a significant number of current employees were becoming "disengaged." Overcoming these potential barriers, although an ongoing challenge, was accomplished via many avenues; the model was built on scientific evidence and hard data, the strategy was easy to implement and made use of existing HR tools. Wherever possible, a direct connection of the engagement strategy to the business was consistently demonstrated and the plan for implementation was flexible, customized to the client and focused on doing only one or two things, or even just doing things differently. Being internal OD practitioners, whom employees already knew and trusted, armed us with the specific knowledge of both the needs of the business as well as the idiosyncrasies of our many cultures. Both were critical to reaching success in a short period of time.

As internal OD consultants, we had a number of “lessons learned”:

1. To be successful, employee engagement must become a part of how Leaders do their jobs everyday. It’s neither a project nor another HR initiative and should not be presented as such.
2. Key terms, like “productivity”, must be carefully defined. Some employees immediately thought we meant working longer hours versus working smarter.
3. The more we can provide clarity, guidance and choices to our leaders, the more willing they become to embrace the initiative.
4. Using existing tools and processes meant we didn’t have to reinvent the wheel and created a sense of immediate familiarity for our leaders, thus increasing “buy-in.”
5. Leaders who do not feel comfortable with this new “concept” resist by arguing that they are involved in other projects and do not have time to focus on engagement – surprising since change leadership is about employee engagement.

*The Employee Engagement Framework was very helpful to us when we had significant changes within our group. We saw that most people were in the “Embrace” stage, but for those in the “Emerge” phase, the framework helped us to respond to their questions and specific needs.*

Vice President, Client Group, U.S.

*We need OD’s continued support on driving employee engagement. We really advocate the use of internal consultants that know the organization, are abreast of the constant, ongoing changes and think WITH us on how to develop our organization and leadership.*

Senior Vice-President, Client Group, Europe