



Employee engagement = Strong internal controls

- **Engaged employees are more likely to enthusiastically support the agency's control structure.**
- **A positive tone at the top, along with open and clear communication channels, help promote employee engagement.**

Employee engagement is defined as a heightened connection between employees and their work, their organization, and the people they work for or with. Engaged employees find personal meaning in their work, take pride in what they do, and believe that their organizations value them. They are willing to expend their discretionary effort to perform their assigned duties thoroughly and accurately. The greater your employees' engagement, the more likely they will go above and beyond minimum expectations to support the agency's internal control structure.

Good employee engagement begins with a positive "tone at the top." Management builds employee engagement by developing a clear vision of the organization's future and communicating this to all employees. Leading by example is key to developing values and an operating style that will uphold the organization's objectives, while balancing the needs and concerns of each employee. Leaders must articulate and reinforce a commitment to do what is right, rather than only what technically complies with a given law, policy, or procedure.

To encourage employee engagement, management must provide open and clear communication channels, indicating that:

- Employee comments, opinions and contributions are welcomed, valued and recognized,
- The organization is committed to help improve employee competency levels,
- Opportunities exist for continuous improvement,
- Employees have a stake in the agency's mission, goals and objectives, and

- The organization's appraisal and reward systems are fair and consistent.

Middle management also has an important role in shaping the views of the employees they manage. They can influence employee levels of engagement by setting clear expectations, providing needed resources, and treating all employees fairly and consistently. Employees must believe they each play a vital role in meeting the organization's overall objectives. They need to understand the importance of the control activities they perform and how those individual control activities support the work of others and, ultimately, the agency's overall control structure.

In conclusion, there is a direct relationship between employees' attitudes about their jobs and their organizations, and how well they perform. Due to their vested interest in the success of their organizations, engaged employees are more likely to be involved and enthusiastic about carrying out and upholding their organization's system of internal controls.

Suggested action steps: How would you rate your agency's level of employee engagement? Think about ways to encourage open and clear methods of communication within your organization. Create a climate that engages and enables all employees to work together to maintain a strong internal control structure.

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