The Power of Federal Employee Engagement

In 2001, the Gallup organization found that business units with high employee engagement scores had better business outcomes than units with lower engagement scores. Similarly, in 2003, Towers Perrin found a clear relationship between increased engagement and improved retention of talent and financial performance. Based on results from the 2005 Merit Principles Survey, we found a similar relationship between higher levels of Federal employee engagement and desirable Federal agency outcomes.

We define employee engagement as a heightened connection between Federal employees and their work, their organization, or the people they work for or with. This connection appears to be stronger than job satisfaction—we found that of those Federal employees who were generally satisfied with their job, only about half were fully engaged in their work. Federal agencies with the most engaged employees experienced better outcomes than did agencies where fewer employees were engaged (see chart). Highly engaged agencies experienced: better programmatic results, less sick leave usage, fewer EEO complaints, and fewer cases of work-related injury or illness.

We found six themes that were important for engaging Federal employees: pride in one's work or workplace, strong organizational leadership, opportunity to perform well at work, appropriate recognition, prospect for future growth, and a positive work environment with some focus on teamwork. Among the recommendations we offer to agencies to improve the level of employee engagement within their workforces is to ensure a good person to job fit when filling vacant positions, recruit and select supervisors to supervise, and manage employee performance with the attention that it deserves.

Subsequent to the release of this report, two follow-up reports were also completed: *Managing for Engagement—Communication, Connection, and Courage* and *Federal Employee Engagement: The Motivating Potential of Job Characteristics and Rewards.*

The Importance of Engagement: Outcomes by Federal Agencies with the Most and Least Engaged Workforces

Average program results/accountability score, OMB's Program Assessment Rating Tool (Feb. 2006)

Most	65
Least	37

Average number of equal employment opportunity complainants in 2005, % of total workforce

Most	0.47
Least	1.04

Average 2005 sick days used per employee

Most	9
Least	12

Average OSHA lost time case rate in 2005 per 100 employees

Most	0.73
Least	2.15

For the full report, including detailed recommendations, please visit www.mspb.gov/studies.