

National Bestseller!

# THE ART of ENGAGEMENT

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Why did you write the book?

We were encouraged to write the book by many clients who were inspired by the unique and creative solutions we developed for engaging employees. Many of these clients were amazed by the wide variety of examples where employees became the leaders of the strategic change in their organizations. They were the ones who actually suggested putting our knowledge and experience in a book so that it could support them and others in their organizations.

### And why now?

Over the last four years, with constant experimentation with our client partners, we have put together the last pieces of a puzzle on how to engage people and sustain strategic change. That last piece was a comprehensive systems view on how to think of the strategic engagement of people as a process. Looking at engagement as a process made it easier to document in a book.

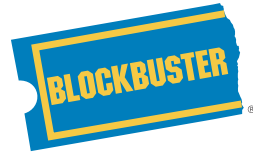


### What did you hope to accomplish?

We hope to hit a chord with those who feel disconnected to their work, and feel their timidity is holding back their performance. We've identified "The Six Keys to Engagement" that not only create a compelling way to engage people, but are also based on how humans want to learn, think, and create solutions together - these six keys tap into both sides of the brain, various learning styles, and the relevance that everyone seeks to participate at a higher level. Presenting this context then helps the reader better relate to the process and tools presented.

### What was the inspiration behind the book?

The real inspiration was the clients who were urging us to find a better way and a faster way to share best practices on engagement.



At the beginning of the writing process, we knew there were reasons why 90% of strategies fail and 75% of people consider themselves "not engaged" at work. We wanted to define these reasons and get people thinking about how they interact with employees. Once they understand what they are doing wrong (or not doing at all), they will be better able to see how the tools and tactics presented could work within their organization.

### Do you practice these principles in your own company?

Yes! We have a very flat organization where every voice is critical to customer satisfaction and company results. We value, recognize, celebrate, and hold people accountable for engagement. As a result, we've been able to achieve things that others have not, such as being honored for the past five years as one of the top 25 small companies to work for in America.



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### Who is the book written for?

People at all levels of an organization can benefit from this book. We include a visual of a canyon that shows the gaps between leaders, managers, and individuals in any organization. People at all three levels can do something different to better connect to their business and to each other.

### What makes it unique among management books?

It is written and illustrated with the reader in mind, using cartoons, sketches, stories, images, pictures, and vignettes to connect with people in a way that mere words won't. It is more than a "how to" book. We take a look at the psyche of employees (how do people learn, what holds them back from engaging/succeeding) to provide context for the tools and tactics discussed.

### Why is engagement the key to success?

If your company requires the efforts of people to execute your strategy, people must understand and embrace your strategy in order for them to contribute the best of themselves to bring it to life.



### Why is engaging employees so hard for people?

1. Leaders fail to treat employees as customers. As a leader, you have to discover what's relevant to employees rather than preach and teach what's important to you so you can motivate them to get involved in the success of the business.
2. We assume that people will invest all of themselves in their work life, and we fail to recognize that fear, uncertainty, and doubt hold them back. It's up to a manager or leader to tap into the discretionary efforts of employees.
3. Leaders forget that what's old to leaders is new to their employees. Leaders have been immersed in the strategic and tactical planning for months before a change is rolled out to employees. When rolling out the change, there is a tendency to do so without explaining the "why" behind the change or fully describing the tactics needed to complete the order.
4. Leaders fail to make it visual. People can grasp strategy once it's visualized. The book details how to create visual representations of communication gaps and corporate strategy, and how to use those visuals to facilitate discussion around everyone's roles.

### Which companies have figured out how to engage employees?

Some companies are good at engagement for a year or two and then lose it, because engagement is fragile, iterative, and always in motion. To keep people engaged, organizations must:

1. Truly believe that their business model and their strategy are totally contingent on tapping into the heads and hearts of their people.
2. Never forget that most of their people have a level of untapped intelligence and excitement for their business – they really want to contribute. It's the job of leaders and managers to find ways to translate the business into terms that make sense to every employee.

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### How will this book help companies to change?

Companies are drowning in communications that are shallow, and people are starving for meaningful, authentic dialogue that can create clarity, alignment, and actions to execute change. The book is based on what is compelling to people and the way they want to be engaged. It carries ideas, concepts, and examples of how to turn hollow rhetoric into meaningful dialogue and results.

### Can the book help equip companies for a possible recession?

Whenever any kind of change comes, the tendency is to hunker down, wait it out, and hope it passes. But we can use the adversity of the change to create new capabilities. The book tells readers how to have the kinds of conversations that people don't know how to have on tough issues, such as business slowdowns, and offers ways to creatively build new pictures of what's possible, even in tough times. If there's ever a time when people must come together and act in unison, it's in challenging times when their behaviors, actions, and beliefs can actually make the biggest difference.

### Where does engagement fit into Mergers and Acquisitions?

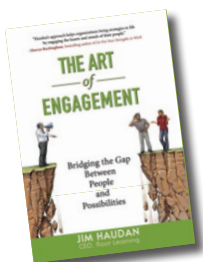
M&As are another form of change, and people tend to see them as losses rather than new opportunities. Many of these views are based on an inability to see the whole, and feeling that you don't belong. Many of the concepts in the book help people accelerate and build clarity on all of these things that can change a sense of loss into a sense of opportunity.

### How does social networking fit in?

At its foundation, social networking is all about getting people to collaborate and share new ideas. People are finding their own ways to do this outside of work, and it's time to discover new ways to do that within the work environment.

### What markets need to engage employees the most?

It's not really about markets or industry groups. It's about every business thinking about its employees as customers – where their commitment and productivity can't be assumed. The level of engagement of any external customer will rarely exceed the level of engagement of your employee customers. The two are inextricably linked. So if you have customers and want to please them, you must engage your employees first.



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