



Employee engagement brings benefits all round

By **Olefile Moea**, Executive Director, Fairheads Benefit Services

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As an administrator, you might be in the “back-office” business, but in fact the human element has never been more important. If you don’t have the right people doing the right thing, your clients will know all about it. That is why employee engagement is so important.

Keep the big picture in mind. If you have an engaged workforce, the business will benefit. There will be more efficiency, better teamwork and an improved bottom line. But it’s not just about the business either - just as important as are the improvements to the social environment.

So how does one go about engaging employees? Best practice is to create employee engagement forums where staff can voice their opinion, engage and be heard, on a regular basis. You also may wish to run surveys from time to time, to gauge needs and get feedback.

Once you have feedback, be as bold as possible in meeting employee needs, as this is how you will build a robust culture. Trust engenders trust.

Here are some examples of the way your business could help to improve employee engagement and the social environment:

- Employee health and well-being – hold wellness days and arrange for a nursing sister to come in once a month
- Similarly, arrange for a beautician to visit once a month. If this sounds like a luxury, consider that your staff will really appreciate the gesture as the convenience factor for them is immense.

- Financial – have you thought of making a debt counsellor available to staff on your premises?
- Education and training – most companies have this in place, but does what you offer really meet the needs expressed in the employee engagement forums? Is your employer study programme relevant?
- Work from home – yes, it is possible for administrators to work from home. Staff often express concern about the stress in their lives created through transport to and from work and the lack of time they can spend on family matters. Trial an employee work-from-home programme and you may be surprised to see an increase in productivity – and a lower staff turnover.

There are social benefits. Staff get the opportunity to take their kids to school, and avoid stressful commuting. They also save on transport costs. As long as they are contactable during office hours and complete their daily allocation of work, they are free to do as they please. Email and WhatsApp groups make teamwork possible despite remote working.

There are societal benefits – we reduce the number of cars and commuters on the road.

And there are business benefits - we reduce certain overheads by having staff work from home.

These are just a few examples of how you can engage employees better. The important thing is to make a start and then to keep the level of engagement up, so that you can measure your success.