

Healthcare  
Edition

Lead & Succeed in a  
Do-More-With-Less World

*6 Shortcuts to*  
**Employee  
Engagement**



**Vicki Hess, RN**

# Contents

Are You Winning the Do-More-With-Less Battle?	7
It Takes 3™	13
<b>6 Shortcuts to Employee Engagement</b>	
Shortcut #1: Embrace Employee Engagement	27
Shortcut #2: Create Connections	35
Shortcut #3: Shrink Team POWs	45
Shortcut #4: Grow Team WOWs	57
Shortcut #5: <i>SHIFT</i> Team POWs to WOWs	67
Shortcut #6: Measure and Monitor	79
The Ultimate Goal – The Triple “Win”	89
Executive Summary	93
Bonus – Tools, Tips & More Shortcuts	97
About the Author	131
Need Help in Engaging Your Employees?	132





## Are You Winning the Do-More-With-Less Battle?

Are you exceeding your productivity measures, knocking the socks off patient satisfaction surveys and meeting all of your departmental goals?

Are your employees just as excited to come *to* work as they are to leave?

Is the current level of work you're asking of your team sustainable?

If you answered, “Yes,” then congratulations are in order! You are winning the do-more-with-less battle while keeping your employees motivated and energized. Feel free to put this book down and work on an important project that needs your attention. *(And please take a minute to send me an email at [vicki@vickihess.com](mailto:vicki@vickihess.com) with your success strategies...I'd love to hear what's working!)*

If you said, “No,” don't feel discouraged. You – along with thousands of other dedicated and caring healthcare leaders – are extremely busy juggling multiple priorities and managing constant challenges. And if you're anything like the healthcare leaders I talk with regularly, you're also dealing with the “perfect storm” of healthcare reform, economic uncertainty and rapid and continual change – a storm that continues to grow. Take a minute to check off the following challenges that you, your team and your organization are experiencing:

- ❑ Financial cutbacks
- ❑ Healthcare reform uncertainties
- ❑ Reimbursement issues
- ❑ Baby Boomers retiring en masse
- ❑ Mergers and closings
- ❑ Blending multigenerational workers
- ❑ New PI/QI processes
- ❑ Changing models of care
- ❑ Stressed & burned-out leaders
- ❑ Technology changes
- ❑ Restructuring & layoffs
- ❑ Union activity
- ❑ ICD-10 implementation
- ❑ Doing more with less

Most leaders check off at least 10! It's no wonder so many healthcare leaders and employees feel tired, unmotivated and powerless. Unfortunately, the harsh reality is that these challenges are not going away anytime soon.

But there is good news: **The challenges you're facing can be improved through optimized employee engagement.**

Yes, you read that correctly. Engaged employees equip organizations with the fuel to move forward *in spite of* challenges like these. In fact, a report recently released by Towers Watson stated: "Amid the complex business challenges facing hospitals today...workforce issues can all too easily drop in importance on management's agenda. Yet Towers Watson research and practical experience indicate this is precisely the wrong time to take your eye off creating the right employee experience....The fact is, employees' attitudes and behavior have a direct and material impact on key patient and clinical results, and can be an essential element in effectively adapting to change."<sup>1</sup>

The evidence indicates that **increased employee engagement drives improved patient satisfaction, quality, safety,**

**productivity and efficiency, as well as virtually every other metric that we track in healthcare.** When team members are actively engaged, it's the equivalent of adding staff without the additional cost! (Have I got your attention now?) Everything ties back to engagement because, ultimately, it always comes down to how well people do their job and how willing they are to do so with passion, energy and effort over time.

The issue of employee engagement is certainly not new. Yet recent statistics show that 60 percent to 70 percent of healthcare employees are either moderately or actively disengaged. Please take a moment to stop and digest that statistic. That's almost three out of every four employees in healthcare who are not actively engaged at work. That's staggering if you really think about it. Doesn't it make you wonder about the effects of all that disengagement on patient care, safety, quality, finances, etc.?

In conducting research for this book, I asked several hospital CEOs why more healthcare organizations aren't adequately addressing employee disengagement with strategies used at highly successful non-healthcare companies. One wise physician CEO summed it up like this: "I think many of us want to, but we don't for a number of reasons: We don't have the will or the know-how. We can't overcome existing organizational culture and inertia. And the tyranny of urgent crises and priorities make engagement issues less visible."

Those sentiments are echoed by healthcare leaders at all levels. I regularly meet and work with leaders who need more support to create an engaging work environment and help employees cope with rampant and rapid change. Another recent study, by ACCOR Services, found that 90 percent of the leaders surveyed said engagement directly impacts their business' success, yet 75 percent of leaders have no engagement strategy.<sup>ii</sup> And that is precisely why I wrote this book!

**6 *Shortcuts to Employee Engagement* offers healthcare leaders a fresh, proactive approach to employee engagement that is realistic, manageable and proven.** A shortcut is a quicker, more efficient way to get somewhere or to get something done. Don't worry; the shortcuts I share aren't shortcuts that diminish quality or service. In fact, just the opposite is true. These shortcuts lead to improved patient care and satisfaction (as well as a positive increase in metrics across the board) because they treat the *cause* of employee disengagement not just the *symptoms*. They aren't Band-Aids. They provide the long-term cure for employee disengagement. And isn't that what you're really looking for – positive, sustainable, long-term change?

This book is different than other books about employee engagement in that there's no need to "start from scratch." Many experts suggest that if you want to improve employee engagement, you need to follow their specific program or prescribed process. But in the ever-changing world of healthcare, these "flavor of the month" initiatives tend to fall by the wayside when priorities shift or things get busy. I'm suggesting another shortcut – instead of doing something *additional* that you don't have time for anyway, you can create a more engaging environment *in conjunction* with what you're already doing.

**You will get better results faster and with less effort when you layer employee engagement concepts onto the framework of your existing systems and processes.**

To help you accomplish that, I've loaded the book with easy-to-use resources for quickly incorporating engagement concepts into your daily activities:

- ◆ **Team exercises** help you share specific ideas with your team so they can put them into practice with ease.



- ◆ A **Bonus Tools section** includes 12 turnkey tools, tips, scripts, exercises and assessments to streamline application.
- ◆ **Access to four free videos** allows you to “plug and play” at team meetings so that you save time and energy.

Please read the whole book before you start implementing the shortcuts. The book is brief by design so that you can easily read all of it. (It should take you less than two hours to finish.) Once you’ve read the whole book, commit to doing the team exercise in the “It Takes 3” chapter titled, “*Whose Job Is It to Make You Happy at Work?*” It will have the biggest impact on engagement. It’s first for a reason – it’s the foundation. Then, you’ll want to triage the challenges your team is facing and decide which shortcuts to explore. Look for ideas that provide the highest impact and return. Better yet, get the team involved in the decision-making when it makes sense.

I do want to caution you about one thing. You may be very excited about the ideas we are discussing and think it’s a good idea to do a “deep dive” into employee engagement by implementing many of the ideas all at once. *Please don’t!* Team members will be leery and think this is another “flavor of the month” endeavor. Resist the temptation to jump in and start making wholesale changes right away. A little introspection goes a long way toward pacing yourself and prioritizing the shortcuts. Oftentimes, slow is better than fast. Let team members process the information, implement change and create a new, positive habit before moving on to the next idea. It will take time. That’s okay. We’re going for the kind of change that is sustainable over time.

Focusing on employee engagement puts you in a position to lead the transformation of healthcare and enjoy your job while you're doing it. Sound too good to be true? I promise it isn't. These six shortcuts, implemented over time, will put you at an advantage for achieving every outcome you seek.