

# Three Tips for Honoring Individual Differences in Employee Engagement

The workforce today is more complex than ever before. We have Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y, each with different motivators and definitions of success. We have more cultural diversity; we have more women in leadership; we have more global companies with employees scattered across numerous offices worldwide.

Yet the keys to engaging each of these groups are the same. By and large, engaged employees will tell you that they feel like they're making a contribution, are recognized in their work and understand their role in the big picture. There will be individual differences, however, in the ways in which employees approach engagement.

**1** The most successful engagement programs tend to reinforce employee individuality. For instance, Tribe recently launched an employee engagement program with a global financial brand. Although the company is committed to six core values, they acknowledge that each employee will exemplify those values in his or her own way. At the company-wide, weeklong celebration that laid the foundation for sustaining programs across the year, several activities were directed at helping employees define their personal characteristics that support those values. We've used these sorts of exercises with several global companies, and have seen firsthand how a light turns on when core values are brought to life, turned from corporate speak into something employees take personally.

For that same client, Tribe is developing a book on the company culture. While much of the text is in the voice of the CEO, the book will also include numerous sidebars by employees sharing their experiences of how these values have impacted their work experience.

**2** A complex workforce requires a range of touch points. Some employees, particularly younger ones, prefer to give and receive information online, making leadership email, employee portals and intranets important building blocks. Others like the tactile element of the printed piece. In-office signage or other environmental communications will generally need to be adapted for larger and smaller offices across geographies. For one hospitality client, Tribe develops a weekly culture blog to build online presence, a quarterly culture magazine to provide a printed piece with longer shelf life and experiential exercises and break-out sessions on culture for people managers and top leadership.

**3** Provide engagement opportunities across the life cycle of careers. What employees are looking for in a company in the early years of their professional lives is generally quite different from the priorities of a seasoned manager. Younger employees are eager for a roadmap for their career and opportunities to develop themselves professionally. Older employees may have become a little more jaded and in need of inspiration or energizing. For older managers at one company, Tribe recommended a program to invigorate their enthusiasm by documenting the wisdom they could pass down to younger managers. By videotaping the elders sharing what they wish they'd known then, they become more engaged – and the managers following in their footsteps can actually benefit from the more senior managers' experience.

Tribe clients include:



## TRIBE

Tribe is a corporate culture company working with national and global clients to build internal brands and employee engagement. We develop strategies, messaging, programs and communications to create better business outcomes.

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