

# TRUST

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The BRIGHTON GROUP

 **Partners** Inc.

The Brighton Group, an OI Partners company is a locally owned and managed consulting firm specializing in career and organizational transition services. In-depth, one-on-one consulting is the core of our distinctive approach.

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Employee engagement, referring to the broad and deep connections people have with an organization, takes on a special significance when an economic downturn makes every relationship precious and every sale represents a hard dollar earned. At the cornerstone of the engagement equation is a relationship built on trust, which begs the question, “Has leadership’s urgent response to the perfect economic storm forced the human capital needs of the workforce to take a backseat placing engagement at risk?”

As we define it, employee engagement encompasses three dimensions:

- **Rational** – Understanding roles and responsibilities
- **Emotional** – The attitude, energy, and passion behind the work
- **Motivational** – The willingness to invest discretionary effort to drive results

Trust, denoting the faith that another will act reliably in ways consistent with our best interest, is at the foundation of all three dimensions. From the employee’s perspective, trust means having confidence that the leader will keep the employee’s well-being at heart and in the forefront of decisions, even during the most challenging times.

Building trust to foster engagement requires several critical activities:

**Candid Conversations.** Evident after chapters of significant adjustment and change is the fact that leaders rarely communicate as effectively or as often as they thought. Lost in translation becomes the corporate world order. In order to rebuild employee trust, reemphasis must be placed on activities that foster personal communications. Candid discourse helps people comprehend the realities present, the risks required, and the rewards available in their work.

**Performance Targets.** When organizations change fast, targets get shifted even faster. Given the emerging new realities, it becomes essential that leaders provide clarity around work prioritization, identify the most important goals, and break down department objectives into clear responsibilities for each individual employee. No mysteries, no ambiguities—just a clear destination and a reason to drive for it.

**Accountability.** Engagement requires leaders to spend the necessary time to gather the right information and observe and evaluate employee performance accurately—something that has been sorely missing during the turbulent atmosphere. Leaders who observe employees performing below expectations perceive this as a critical, high priority and deal with it effectively and urgently. Accountability becomes the ultimate payoff to close the circle of trust: Performance produces results, outcomes justify trust, and recognition for performance elevates engagement.



In all economies, especially recovering from a deeply troubled one, organizations that recognize that employee engagement is one of, if not the most, critical pieces in driving business results during recovery. No longer can leadership afford to respond to only the levers that impact the financial capital equation. Instead, those who ensure the human capital side is equally invested in will have the power to climb back to prosperity, making the climb faster than the competition.

***“A better human experience...for a better business outcome”***

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