



The Engagement is Still Off

Does Not Taking the Survey Hurt Your Manager?

While the majority of frontline IRS employees refused to take the annual employee survey last year, there were still those who took it for a variety of reasons. Some thought that management would finally follow through with improvements. Now, they have seen how little was done with the data. Others thought that it was too risky not to take it, unaware that the majority of employees would refuse to take it. Still others took it because they thought it would help their manager.

Many employees have a good relationship with their frontline manager; in fact, we hope most of you do. But, NTEU asks you to carefully consider whether taking the survey really helps your manager. Here are a few reasons why:

1. **Avoid labeling:** Work groups—in which more than four employees take the survey—are going to be rated and scored. There is a very good chance that your work group will be rated poorly and your manager (and possibly you) will bear the consequences for that. Work groups with less than four employees taking the survey will not be scored.
2. **Management by Scoring:** Management wants to go back to the old days of using numbers rather than information to manage. If you take the survey and your group gets a score, then your manager will be evaluated against that number. Say **No!** to the entire scheme to evaluate anyone by numbers by saying **No!** to the survey.
3. **The E-Sat Element:** Since management has replaced “Employee Satisfaction” with “Employee Engagement,” NTEU believes employees should no longer be evaluated on the Employee Satisfaction critical element. If you continue to take the survey and give your manager a score, it will only prolong the use of the Employee Satisfaction element.

Don't make the mistake of thinking you are helping your manager by taking the survey. Even if you feel compelled to turn in something, don't do your manager and everyone else in the group a disservice by filling in scores.

NTEU is committed to an annual survey to boost Employee Satisfaction, but this discredited process is not the answer. NTEU looks forward to the day when IRS truly listens and responds to the concerns of employees, until then, our silence will be deafening.

The engagement is still off. Just say **No!** to the IRS Employee Survey.

Colleen M. Kelley
National President



NTEU regrets to inform you that the engagement between the IRS and its employees has been called off.

The continued insistence of the IRS to move forward with a survey ignoring employees' concerns doomed the relationship.

NTEU is demanding that the IRS take concerted action to address employee satisfaction and use the survey results to improve the workplace.



During these difficult times, NTEU asks all IRS employees to join their 60,000 co-workers and refrain from taking the 2006 survey.

NTEU

The National Treasury Employees Union

www.nteu.org



The Engagement is Off

Late last year NTEU informed IRS management that the Employee Satisfaction Survey was not serving its original intent and had turned into a waste of valuable time and money. Management's response was to turn its back on the idea of employee satisfaction and insist that we all get "engaged." Top officials decreed that the "employee satisfaction" was a concept that was no longer relevant and that everyone would be better off if we focused on "employee engagement."

NTEU leaders across the IRS immediately recognized the absurdity of the idea but we wanted to see what the IRS would do with it. Perhaps they were finally going to find a way to actually make the changes employees asked for in the 2004 survey; perhaps they were finally going to hold managers accountable when they scored poorly and reward those managers who scored highly; and perhaps they were even going to have substantive discussions with employees about the survey data. All of this was possible.

Well, the first few months of the "engagement" are over and it is clear there is no reason to plan for a honeymoon. Most managers have refused to pass out their group's survey data and most managers have refused to have any substantive discussions about engagement during group meetings. Could it be that these managers recognize that their own credibility will diminish if they proceed with this ludicrous idea? Even though top IRS management has the 2005 survey results, there is no indication that managers are being held accountable for poor scores or being recognized and rewarded for high scores.

Yet, the IRS is busy planning to run another "engagement" survey in April in the hopes of sparking your interest. But I have heard from NTEU members and they are united in declaring that "The Engagement is Off!"

Last year, more than 60,000 IRS employees refused to take the survey and I hope that they will again refuse to participate. If you did take the 2005 survey, did it make a difference? I suspect the answer is a resounding no. This year, I hope everyone will consider joining your 60,000 coworkers and refuse to play along with the engagement game. Send a message that the changes employees have been seeking in previous surveys must be made. Demand that your voice be heard.

Over the next few weeks you will hear more from NTEU about management's plans and our actions to refocus IRS executives on employee satisfaction. Until then, remember that your best friend at work is NTEU.

Colleen M. Kelley
National President

Subject: FW: Deputy Commissioners Dalrymple and Matthews: Defining Employee Engagement

I am sending this to you, as you are the mouthpiece and distribution system for the chapter of bargaining unit members that I truly hold dear.....

I am stupefied by the emails that have flown over the past week or so, from very high level executives in the Service. I have withheld judgment, and comment until now. I believe that I have waited for the right moment:

I know you - as my stewards - and I know the employees that you represent. I am deeply proud to say that the employees that I happen to know, and respect, in this crippled Agency, **are all highly engaged, as defined by the IRS itself**. You are motivated - in spite of the many obstacles this agency throws at you. You are committed to serving a customer higher than this Agency: the taxpaying public. You are constantly involved in the mission of this organization, no matter how many times the face of it changes!

In spite of the high level of your engagement, your satisfaction mostly continues to come from self-made achievements, because, although the IRS "wants employees to know their contributions are valued" employees know that they really aren't! My real message is to just say thanks for hanging in there, and doing what you all do best, and if anyone tries to measure your satisfaction again this year, let them know just how satisfied you are, and why!

This is for distribution.....please send to anyone that you think needs to read it, and post where appropriate!

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From: *IRS Communications

Sent: Wednesday, January 18, 2006 1:32 PM

To: &IRS All Employees

Subject: Deputy Commissioners Dalrymple and Matthews: Defining Employee Engagement

In our December [e-mail](#) to you, we discussed the importance of integrating employee engagement into our daily operations and the efforts we have underway to accomplish this. After that message went out, we received feedback that many of you want more specifics including a more complete definition of employee engagement. With that in mind, we'd like to take this opportunity to discuss how IRS defines "employee engagement" and why we believe employee satisfaction plays a vital role in employee engagement.

The IRS defines employee engagement as the degree of employees' motivation, commitment and involvement in the mission of the organization. Employee satisfaction is a key component of employee engagement. By placing an emphasis on employee engagement, we do not mean to imply that employee satisfaction is no longer important to the IRS. We recognize that employee satisfaction has a tremendous impact on our ability to accomplish our mission.

To say this another way, the IRS needs active, motivated, and successful employees to meet its goals. We want our employees trained, involved, and positioned to make a difference. We also want employees to know their contributions are valued. All of these elements are part of achieving an engaged workforce.

Many of you have already received specific guidance on how your division will work toward further engaging employees. To date more than 180 issues raised during meetings Servicewide have been entered into Engagement Strategy Tracker (ESTracker) and some groups already have identified solutions to overcoming barriers that could prevent them from achieving their 2006 goals. In fact, there are currently five proposed shared solutions that will become available soon for all ODs/FDs to review and consider for implementation.

In future e-mails, we will share more information about our successes and answer more of your questions about employee engagement. In the meantime, we encourage you to go to the [Employee Engagement](#) Web site to stay abreast of the activities we are undertaking.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment.