

# Acas Urges Businesses To Improve Employee Engagement



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Acas, the employment relations service, is encouraging UK businesses to prepare for the potential economic up-turn by focusing on employee engagement.

In its new discussion paper Acas highlights the simple procedures that can increase employee engagement in the workplace, to improve staff retention, increase morale and encourage greater productivity.



It also indicates that there is a good case for focusing on employee engagement as a business priority. Employees who are committed to their work are much more likely to behave in a positive, cooperative way. Engagement is therefore a benefit to both employees and the business.

Ed Sweeney Acas Chair said: "The recession means that a lot of businesses have experienced a challenging period. Inevitably, this has had a knock-on effect on employees and morale. As we approach what might be the beginning of the end of the downturn, business leaders and managers have a responsibility to encourage an open business culture.

"There is plenty of evidence which suggests strong employee engagement can help boost the bottom line. Our advice to businesses is that by engaging properly with staff, organisations will put themselves in a better position to emerge from the recession in a healthy position."

The discussion paper also highlights the important role played by line managers but argues that they should not work in isolation. It also suggests that to be effective, they need good teams around them and senior managers who support the same values and demonstrate the same kind of behaviours. These include open communication, regular positive feedback and an emphasis on personal skills and development.

The paper identifies some specific factors, based on The MacLeod report, published in July 2009, outlining four broad enablers, which are critical to gaining employee engagement. These are:

- Leadership - employees need to understand not only the purpose of the business but also how their individual role contributes to that vision
- Engaging managers - engaging managers offer clarity for what is expected from the employees, treat their people as individuals with fairness and respect
- Employee voice - employees' views should be sought out, listened to and employees made to feel that their opinions count
- Integrity - if an employee sees the values of the business ingrained in the management team, a sense of trust is more likely to be developed.

The new discussion paper [Building Employee Engagement](#) and the advisory booklet, [How to Manage Change](#), helping line managers and employers manage major change are available through the ACAS website.

Notes for editors

**About [Acas](#):**

Acas' aim is to improve organisations and working life through better employment relations. It provides information, advice, [training courses](#) and a range of services working with employers and employees to prevent or resolve problems and improve performance. It is an independent statutory body governed by a Council consisting of the Acas Chair and employer, trade union and independent members.

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