

# Significant trends in employee engagement

By Michelle Caldeira

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The South African employee engagement sphere is an exciting space to work in as we accommodate both international trends and local nuances. The combination of a growing awareness of the necessity of fully integrated employee engagement practices, and an increased willingness on the part of corporates to step out of comfort and complacency zones, makes stimulating and ground breaking working possible for employee engagement specialists.

2013 saw some definite shifts which give indications for 2014 - some necessitated by economics, others by the changing world of technology. There are clear and significant trends that are being seen in the employee engagement world and then there are gut-feel changes that we take into account in our forward planning for clients - in the past we have invariably been proven right.

## 1. Infobesity

The approximate number of advertising messages that the modern consumer sees in a day is 350,000. And your internal marketing messages are added onto that. Is it any wonder that they get lost if they aren't strategic, carefully planned and highly engaging? Recipients want short, sharp messaging; which brings us to...

## 2. Simlosion

Make an impact by keeping communication clear, single-minded and simple. Word-heavy is out.

## 3. Pic your messages

Infographics, Instagram, Vine, Video, Vimeo , YouTube...Graphic messaging is still growing, moving steadily from leisure-time social media into corporate messaging.

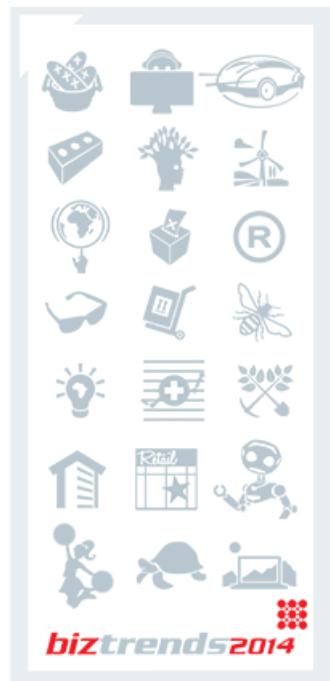
## 4. Digit-all

Off desk and into hand. Internationally, employers are recognising that cross-device digital participation is essential to reach on-the-goers and Generations Y and Z. It is the most effective way to reach employees in a non-alienating way, in their private space and downtime. Noticeboards are disappearing and emails increasingly ignored or fast-scanned with reduced absorption and engagement. The increased integration of digital devices means single messaging reaching all touch points.

## 5. Democratise

The HO big brother's voice is fading. Effective and engaged internal communication means integrating the function across all departmental silos and allowing organic dissemination of messaging. Clearer meaning and stronger buy-in is the result. Employees need to own a piece of the pie.

## 6. Toss the cookie cutter



This need has grown beyond the tailored-communication savvy under 35s, to most employee groups. Horizontal and vertical customisation of messages have become strategically essential across job level, age, technology adoption and line function. Individualisation is the entry point to effective communication.

## 7. Face to face

An interesting and perhaps ironic retro-trend: The expressed need for mindful, one-on-one communication and messaging interaction. In the face of the reality of distance communication, electronic contact and mass messaging in all its forms, engaged employees value 'me-time': having their voices heard in a real-life context.

## 8. Breaking news

Distance working and a need for instant buy-in necessitates dual delivery strategies: long-term strategic rollouts as well as instantaneous messaging. Employers cannot be perceived as slow in providing information - it's a race against Twitter, Facebook, BBM... Wikileaks has nothing on employee grapevine information.

## 9. Socialise

If you're not in, employees will believe you are 'out'. Honest, effective, 360-degree integrated communication across all social media is more of a necessity than a 'nice-to-have'.

## 10. Intrapreneurship

A growing engagement trend is the encouraging of employees to innovate and grow their own business ideas alongside their mainstream duties, giving them permission and support to grow.

## 11. Hardcore

Soft issues have become core issues - and hard issues. Employee engagement is being seen as a necessity and being placed high on executive agendas as a strategic imperative.

## 12. Measurement

ROI impact is widely recognised and now more actively and accurately measured as a cross-section of industries adopts employee engagement as a priority. EE measurement must be part and parcel of every other monthly measurement by a business.

## 13. Bonus must-read...

Shelagh Foster's Your First Year of Work - A Survival Guide, endorsed by UFS rector Jonathan Jansen, is hot off the press. You'd do well to give a copy to everyone who's just starting off in the big wide world of work, especially if they're going to be working for you! And like Blue Mooners, love what you do!

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## ABOUT MICHELLE CALDEIRA

Michelle Caldeira is the managing director of Blue Moon Corporate Communications, specialists in Integrated Employee Engagement. Blue Moon turns 25 in 2014, marking a quarter of a century of loving what we do!  
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