



**"WHEN PEOPLE ARE EXCITED, AND PASSIONATE, AND ON FIRE, GREAT THINGS CAN HAPPEN FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION."**

Michael Johnson, CEO of Boys and Girls Club

Children are most influenced by those they are closest to – family, friends, and primary care providers. That’s why employee engagement is a priority at Boys and Girls Club.

"Our staff works directly with kids," said Michael Johnson, CEO of the Dane County location. "If we’re going to transform kids’ lives, we need an engaged and happy workforce."

In the last three years, raising engagement has led to outstanding increases in revenue, retention, and club attendance.

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### Crucial Insight for a New Leader

The Board of Directors of Boys and Girls Club decided to measure employee engagement for the first time in 2009 through Quantum Workplace with guidance from Wipfli CPAs & Consultants.

Quantum Workplace’s TeamPulse survey became an essential tool in providing meaningful input for the new leadership hire.

Boys and Girls Club’s initial survey reported only 9.7 percent of employees as engaged with over 25 percent qualifying as hostile. Trust in senior leaders, feeling valued, and individual contribution ranked the lowest for the club.

"The [Quantum Workplace] reports gave me a head start as a new leader coming into an

organization," said Michael. "They gave me a detailed synopsis of how employees felt about the organization. People genuinely weren’t happy working at Boys and Girls Club."

The reports enabled Michael to enter his new position with a 90-day entry plan to jumpstart the organization’s employee engagement efforts.

Addressing three key weaknesses, Michael and the management team focused on three goals:

- 1. Increase effective communication between leadership and staff
- 2. Build trust and ownership in employee roles
- 3. Make work awesome at Boys and Girls Club

# RESULTS

## Higher Engagement Leads to Increased Revenue, Retention, and Club Participants

Since its first survey four years ago, Boys and Girls Club's overall engagement score increased by more than 20 points. In 2009, less than 9.7 percent of the organization's employees measured as engaged and over half as disengaged or hostile.

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**"[A survey] really helps transform the culture of an organization, if it's willing to go through the process. In the beginning, it may be difficult, but I have no doubt in my mind that it will pay off."**  
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Today, 49.2 percent of employees rank as engaged, a 407 percent increase from 2009. In addition, none of the employees rank as actively disengaged or hostile.

### 2X the Revenue

It's no surprise to Boys and Girls Club that a happy workforce leads to good business.

"We went from a \$1.4 million agency to almost tripling our budget and workforce," said the leader of the nonprofit.

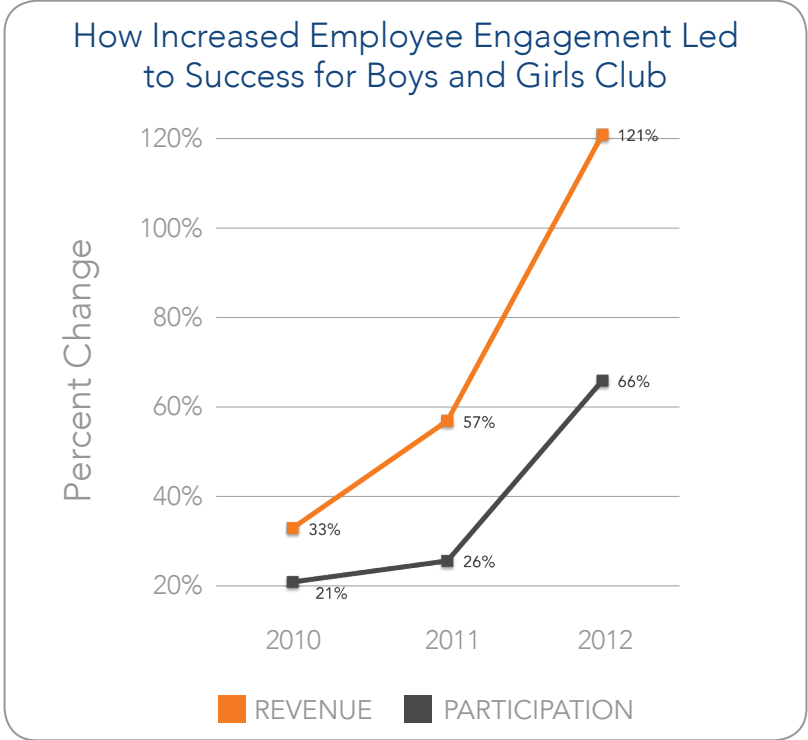
Michael directly attributes the club's financial growth to its employee engagement strategy.

"We listened to our staff, got recommendations and took a bottom-up approach when we made major decisions."

Because of its efforts, Boys and Girls Club brought in almost \$3.1 million in 2012.

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### 75% Retention Rate

The club has a 75 percent retention rate, largely due to the leadership team's intentional approach to satisfy employees. Competitive wages, individual recognition, consistent communication, and training for staff and volunteers are all new organizational initiatives that lead to a high and continually increasing retention rate compared to other nonprofits.

"I have to force people to take vacations, go home in the evenings, and not come in on weekends," said Michael. "That tells me that people are passionate and

committed. They're excited to be here. They want to be here."

### 66% Increase in Participants

"Kids vote by their attendance," said Michael. "It's a drop-in program. So, if kids show up, they're here because they want to be here."

The club has gone from serving around 1,800 kids in 2009, to now serving almost 3,000 kids. In fact, some programs, such as the club's summer camp, have seen an attendance increase of more than 100 percent.

**Can increasing employee engagement double your revenue?**  
 Find out! TeamPulse allows you to gather feedback, analyze results, and take action to improve employee engagement. Contact an engagement specialist today.



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# SUCCESS STEPS

## Three Initiatives That Improved Employee Engagement

### 1 Increase Effective Communication Among Staff

The club implemented new organizational initiatives to combat ineffective communication.

Upon his arrival, Michael implemented an open-door policy throughout the organization that promoted communication and problem solving. Michael asked that those who came in with concerns also provided recommendations in order to resolve the current issue. The new policy led to a bottom-up structure of communication, where those who are most affected address the issues.

"The best advice comes from the people whose boots are on the ground," said Michael. "They told me where the inefficiencies were

and gave recommendations on how to improve those inefficiencies."

#### New Communication Initiatives:

- **Weekly Calls:** Ensure consistent communication between departments
- **Monthly Staff Meetings:** Allow department heads to communicate change and progress
- **Shout-outs:** Give staff a chance to recognize individuals who go above and beyond
- **Recognition Dinners:** Held twice a year to honor staff for hard work and dedication
- **Focus Groups:** Implemented to improve specific organizational issues

### 2 Build Trust and Ownership

Trust in senior leaders and role ownership were also hot-button issues for the staff. TeamPulse results showed that universal titles given to members of the direct-care staff led to a lack of responsibility, role ownership, and trust.

In response, the club implemented new performance standards to ensure expectations were clear to employees and leaders. While redefining job descriptions and changing roles caused initial anxiety, the club's new bottom-up communication approach quickly dissolved the discomfort.

"We didn't make these decisions in a vacuum," said Michael. "It was the staff that really influenced how we made a lot of those decisions."

### 3 Make Work Awesome at Boys and Girls Club

The third initial challenge was to make sure people were happy and excited to come to work. This meant supplying competitive wages, renovating facilities, and recognizing a job well done.

#### Wages

"None of us are doing this work to get rich," said Michael. "But at the same time, if the issue is about money, we don't want people to leave because we're not paying them what they're worth."

To invest in human capital and triple its budget in just three years, the club:

- Developed focus groups
- Constructed multi-year plans
- Diversified funding streams

#### Facilities

Additional funds allowed for many behind-the-scenes improvements, such as replacing old, broken-down vans with new vehicles and complete building renovation that resulted in a clean, well-lit environment for staff.

#### Recognition

"When you recognize people and honor them for their work, they feel appreciated. They're going to be more committed to delivering the work that we're responsible for at Boys and Girls Club," said Michael.

To recognize employees for hard work and dedication, the club continues to:

- Give weekly shout-outs
- Host recognition dinners
- Share staff success

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# BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB AT A GLANCE

## Challenges

A CEO from outside the organization was brought in as a new leadership hire in 2009. Upon Michael's employment, the club was struggling with ineffective communication, a lack of trust among senior staff, and unhappy employees.

## Solution

Boys and Girls Club used Quantum Workplace's TeamPulse survey to accurately measure employee engagement. The organization, with guidance from Wipfli CPAs and Consultants, then used employee feedback to implement positive changes throughout the organization. Some examples include: new communication initiatives, a redefinition of employee roles, and improvements in facilities, employee wages, and staff recognition.

## Results

- Almost tripled workforce and doubled operating budget in less than three years
- Completely renovated club facilities and vehicles
- Increased the total number of club participants by 66 percent, some programs saw an increase of 100 percent
- Gave raises to all middle-level management
- Improved the number of engaged employees by 407 percent since 2009
- Increased retention rate to 75 percent across both employees and volunteers

## Future Plans

Michael and his staff have implemented a five-year strategic plan that clearly maps out the organization's improvement goals; however, he knows that these goals will be nearly impossible to meet without an engaged workforce. How does he know if his workforce is engaged and the organization is headed in the right direction? For Michael the answer is simple:

- Gather useful employee feedback
- Analyze the in-depth reports
- Implement positive changes

