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**Forum For People Performance Management And Measurement
Explores Ideas Around “Human Capital” At Think Tank**

Engaged employees” can increase ROI 20 percent

Oct. 26, 2009 Naperville, IL -- In an exploratory session, participants in a recent [Forum for People Performance Management and Measurement](#) Think Tank came to grips with the question of “Who’s in Charge – Thriving in a People-led Economy.”

“Many companies are still downsizing their workforce,” said Forum president Michelle M. Smith, CPIM, CRP, “a workforce which is already feeling the effects of recession-heavy workloads, little to no recognition for a job well done and the ever-present fear of losing their job. These effects combine to form a less-than-engaged workforce– an environment that companies can ill-afford. One of our challenges is to help organizations keep their top talent and strengthen the relationship between employer and employee to be better positioned for the future.”

Participants discussed a number of ways to deal with this and other people management challenges as the economy struggles to come out of the recession.

According to the Think Tank’s principal speakers Michael Lee Stallard and Jason Pankau, authors of *Fired Up or Burned Out*, employers who foster an environment of employee engagement in their companies discover those employees are 20 percent more productive than the ones who “just show up.” Engagement, however, can often require a cultural shift for

many companies. “That’s where leadership comes in,” said Stallard. “Front line employees often have great ideas about making things better. They also often have a better handle on competitive intelligence. The challenge for corporate leadership, then, is to create a culture where that knowledge can perk up rapidly through the organization and not run into ‘knowledge blocks’ – often created as a result of midlevel internal politics.”

An effective way to create that cultural shift is by developing and fostering connections and relationships within all levels of an organization, the authors explained. Stallard and Pankau defined connections as “a bond based on shared identity, empathy and understanding that moves self-centered individuals toward group-centered membership.” Once internal connections are in place among corporate leadership and employees, then improved connections can be made with customers – leading to increased success in the marketplace.

Participants also explored what it may mean to go beyond employee engagement to employee enrichment, a relatively new concept, developed by the Forum, that takes into account the changing relationship between employers and employees as retiring Baby Boomers are replaced by younger workers with often vastly different workplace expectations. A corollary discussion topic was another Forum-created concept, the rise of a people-led economy, created in part by the changing makeup of the workforce and its behaviors as consumers.

About the Forum for People Performance Management and Measurement

The Forum for People Performance Management and Measurement

www.performanceforum.org) is a research center within the Medill Integrated Marketing Communications graduate program at Northwestern University. A central objective of the **Forum** is to develop and disseminate knowledge about communications, motivation and management so that businesses can better design, implement and manage **Employee Engagement** initiatives inside and outside the organization.

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