



# Driving Employee Engagement

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Strategic HR

Hire ❖ Develop ❖ Retain

# Employee Engagement

Engagement is the extent to which employees are committed to their job, organization, manager, coworkers, and working both harder and smarter rather than merely showing up to do what they're obliged to do. Engaged employees contribute discretionary effort in accomplishing their objectives.

## The Data Shows

Survey research has demonstrated that companies with engaged employees have better productivity, improved customer satisfaction, greater profitability, and lower turnover than companies whose employees are not engaged in their work. In over 20 years of research with the Gallup Organization, Marcus Buckingham has reported that only 26% of the US workforce is engaged, while 55% are not engaged, and 19% are actively disengaged (MRA Trail Blazer Series).



# The Seven Management Drivers of Engagement

1.

## **Pride in the Organization**

Employees have a sense of pride in being part of the organization. They recommend the organization to prospective employees and customers. Employees feel that their own values and personal mission match the values and mission of the organization. The manager instills in employees the value of the organization and its product or service. The manager proactively learns about the organization's direction, history, products, strategies, values, successes, and culture. The manager then positively, honestly, and continually communicates this information to employees.

2.

## **Significance and Linkage**

Employees know their contribution is appreciated and is important to the success of the organization and understand how their role is a part of the bigger picture. The manager makes clear how employees' jobs and objectives align with overall company strategy and goals. The manager positively reinforces employees' efforts impacting the organization.

3.

## **Job Fit**

Employees derive emotional and mental stimulation from the day-to-day content and routine of the job. The manager structures the job with clear expectations that take into account the interest of employees and makes sure there is a "skill match." The manager empowers employees to make appropriate independent decisions and to have ownership in their work. Where possible, the manager structures the job so that employees learn skills needed for future desired positions.

4.

## **Trust, Integrity, and Credibility**

Employees believe what their manager says. They know that their manager is consistent in telling the truth, delivering on promises, sharing both positive and negative information as needed, and treating people fairly and equitably. The manager protects personal credibility by being reliable, honest, open, and accepting. The manager admits mistakes and takes responsibility for employee performance. The manager is an active advocate for employees.

5.

## **Supportive Culture**

Employees feel they have the willing assistance of team members in achieving goals. There is a sense of collegiality with the team as well as other departments. To create this environment the manager capitalizes on everyone's strengths, lets them know their importance to the team, communicates in a way that shows the team is valuable, ties individual success to group success, celebrates achievements, and responds to the needs of the team. The manager clears roadblocks and removes obstacles. The manager proactively handles dysfunctional communication behaviors and promotes diversity in thinking and actions.

6.

## **Emotional Connection**

Employees know their boss is genuinely concerned about them beyond just work. They are willing to "give more" because of the relationship and rapport shared with their manager. The manager is genuinely empathetic to the personal and professional needs and values/goals of employees, and is flexible in terms of job structure and communication. The manager adjusts personal communication to meet the styles of employees.

7.

## **Employee Development**

Employees feel that there are opportunities for growth (which may or may not include promotion) and are able to see a viable career path. Employees take on new challenges and learn new skills. The manager actively assists in and identifies employee skills/strengths/interests and areas for improvement to help in career development. The manager plays to employee strengths and helps employees develop new skills for current and future positions.



# 1. Pride in the Organization

**Pride in the Organization:** Employees have a sense of pride in being part of the organization. They recommend the organization to prospective employees and customers. Employees feel that their own values and personal mission match the values and mission of the organization. The manager instills in employees the value of the organization and its product or service. The manager proactively learns about the organization's direction, history, products, strategies, values, successes, and culture. The manager then positively, honestly, and continually communicates this information to employees.

## The Data Shows

30% of employees respond "Mixed/Disagree" when asked, "Are you proud to work for your company?"

39% of employees respond "Mixed/Disagree" with the statement "I would say my company is a good place to work."

44% of employees respond "Mixed/Unfavorable" with the statement "My company has a reputation as a good employer."

49% of employees respond "Mixed/Disagree" when asked to respond to the statement "My company inspires me to do my best work."



## **Organizational Pride - Thought Questions:**

1. When you think of having pride in your organization, what does that mean to you?

2. What impact does pride, or lack thereof, have on any organization? Why is it important? Try to come up with some specific examples.



## **Creating an Environment That Encourages Employee Pride in the Organization**

1. What do managers do to instill a sense of organizational pride in their employees?

2. Based upon your experience, give specific examples of how a boss instilled in you a sense of pride in your organization and how it impacted your performance.



## 2. Significance and Linkage

**Significance and Linkage:** Employees know their contribution is appreciated and is important to the success of the organization, and understand how their role is a part of the bigger picture. The manager makes clear how employees' jobs and objectives align with the overall company strategy and goals. The manager positively reinforces employees' efforts impacting the organization.

### The Data Shows

55% of employees respond "Mixed/Unfavorable" (27% "Unfavorable") to the statement "[My manager] communicates clear vision for long-term success."

19% of employees respond "Mixed/Disagree" to the statement "[I] understand how my role relates to company goals and objectives."



## How a Manager Creates Significance and Linkage – Connecting the Employee to the Big Picture:

“An article in the *WorldatWork Journal* states that a critical retention success driver is ‘how well employees understand the company’s mission, strategies, and goals, and how they can contribute to company results. Companies that fail to educate employees on business and organizational objectives and customer needs often have higher turnover rates.’” (Beverly Kaye and Sharon Jordan-Evans)

Managers create engaged employees by directly linking their efforts to the big picture of the organization. Broadly speaking, these efforts can fall into four categories:

### **Information**

- Getting all information that would benefit employees to them as quickly as possible.
- In the absence of information, people will fill in the blanks with information that is generally less favorable than reality.
- Providing or facilitating employee “question and answer” opportunities—and really listening.
- Answering questions that may seem beyond the normal scope of employee interest.

### **Connection**

- Establishing employee objectives and goals that flow from the organization’s strategic plan.
- Encouraging employees to learn more about their job and their industry through associations, networks, professional communities, etc.

### **Appreciation**

- Recognizing and genuinely appreciating the employee’s contribution to organizational success.
- Providing positive and constructive feedback on how employee efforts impact the company.

### **Politics**

- Helping employees navigate and adjust to interdepartmental and organizational politics by anticipating roadblocks and planning accordingly.
- Staying current regarding what is happening in the organization or “staying in the loop.”

Source: Adapted from *Love ‘Em or Lose ‘Em*, by Beverly Kaye & Sharon Jordan-Evans, Berrett-Koehler Publishers





## Application Exercise:

One of your best employees has come to you because he is strongly considering leaving your company, and you do not want to lose this employee! He told you he has received an offer from another organization that includes a 10% pay increase in a similar role. Below are the reasons he indicated for leaving, and he is asking you to address his concerns. You are meeting with him tomorrow, and you need to think through how you are going to respond to those concerns.

1. I feel like a mushroom—I'm left in the dark a lot. I know little about our strategy, goals, finances, vision, etc. I feel like I have to rely on the company grapevine for my information.
2. I lack clarity on how my contribution affects the organization—I don't see how what I do is aligned with the big picture.
3. It seems like people try to make me "feel" important rather than recognize my importance—in other words, they don't really feel I'm important. It's like I'm a cog in the gears.
4. My potential new boss at the other company is very connected in her organization— she understands politics and knows what's going on in other departments.



### 3. Job Fit

**Job Fit:** Employees derive emotional and mental stimulation from the day-to-day content and routine of the job. The manager structures the job with clear expectations that take into account the interest of employees and makes sure there is a “skill match.” The manager empowers employees to make appropriate independent decisions and to have ownership in their work. Where possible, the manager structures the job so that employees learn skills needed for future desired positions.

#### The Data Shows

47% of employees respond “Mixed/Unfavorable” when asked if their “company provides challenging work.”

51% of employees respond “Fair/Poor” to “Very Poor” to the statement “[My manager provides] clear goals and direction.”



## Your Group is the Instructor!

Your group is charged with presenting the other group(s) with 4–5 ideas or tips when engaging in one of these two “job fit” activities:

- A. Interviewing candidates for a job—making sure they are the right fit.
- B. Enriching current employees roles by either providing opportunities for changing what they do (job content) or how they do their job (process).

Have fun—be creative! You can tell a story, create a skit, draw a picture, etc.



## 4. Trust, Integrity & Credibility

**Trust, Integrity & Credibility:** Employees believe what their manager says. They know that their manager is consistent in telling the truth, delivering on promises, sharing both positive and negative information as needed, and treating people fairly/equitably. The manager protects personal credibility by being reliable, honest, open, and accepting. The manager admits mistakes and takes responsibility for employee performance. The manager is an active advocate for employees.

### The Data Shows

62% of employees respond “Mixed/Unfavorable” (35% “Unfavorable”) to the statement “[My manager] communicates openly and honestly.”

54% of employees respond “Mixed/Unfavorable” (27% “Unfavorable”) to the statement “[My manager] has integrity.”



## Evaluating Others' Perceptions – Self Assessment

### Rating Scale

1 = I've consistently succeeded at this during the past 12 months

2 = I've failed at this more than once during the past 12 months

	<b>My self-rating</b>	<b>How I think my direct reports would rate me</b>
1. Keep promises and agreements		
2. Give honest and complete answers to questions and challenges		
3. Protect confidential or sensitive information		
4. Admit when I've made a mistake		
5. Consider the trust and confidence of my coworkers to be important		
6. Make an effort to foster open, honest, and sincere communication		
7. Encourage others to question practices they cannot support		
8. Make use of the company's values or code of conduct to guide me in making ethical decisions		
9. Demonstrate consistency between my words and actions		
10. Allow time for others to ask questions		

Source: Adapted from *Successful Manager's Handbook* by Susan H. Gebelein, published by PreVisor.





7. Encourage others to question practices they cannot support:

8. Make use of the company's values or code of conduct to guide you in making ethical decisions:

9. Demonstrate consistency between your words and your actions:

10. Allow time for others to ask questions:



## 5. Supportive Culture

Employees feel they have the willing assistance of team members in achieving goals. There is a sense of collegiality with the team as well as other departments. To create this environment, the manager capitalizes on everyone's strengths, lets them know their importance to the team, communicates in ways that show the team is valuable, ties individual success to group success, celebrates achievements, and responds to the needs of the team. The manager clears roadblocks and removes obstacles. The manager proactively handles dysfunctional communication behaviors and promotes diversity in thinking and actions.

### The Data Shows

52% of employees responded "Mixed/Unfavorable" (22% "Unfavorable") to the statement "[My manager] supports new ideas and ways of doing things."

54% of employees responded "Fair/Poor" to "Very Poor" (27% "Poor" to "Very Poor") to the statement "[My manager inspires] enthusiasm for work."





## How to Build a Supportive Team

Identify 10 ways a manager can create a supportive team environment:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.



## **6. Emotional Connection**

Employees know their boss is genuinely concerned about them beyond just work. They are willing to “give more” because of the relationship and rapport shared with their manager. The manager is genuinely empathetic to the personal and professional needs/values/goals of employees and is flexible in terms of job structure and communication. The manager adjusts personal communication to meet the styles of employees.



## Creating Emotional Connection

How do you avoid:

1. Coming across as intimidating?
2. Coming across as condescending, demeaning, or belittling?
3. Being perceived as arrogant?
4. Coming across as rude?
5. Putting your own success above organizational or others success?



6. Coming across as blaming when simply holding people accountable?

7. Coming across as aloof or not caring – especially for those who are more introverted?

8. Taking out your “bad mood” on others?

9. Using fear as the only motivator?

10. Coming across as impatient – even when you are busy?



## 7. Employee Development

Employees feel that there are opportunities for growth (which may or may not include promotion) and are able to see a viable career path. Employees take on new challenges and learn new skills. The manager actively assists in and identifies employee skills/strengths/interests and areas for improvement to help in career development. The manager plays to employee strengths and helps employees develop new skills for current and future positions.

### **The Data Shows**

66% of employees respond “Mixed/Unfavorable” (34% “Unfavorable”) to the statement “Employees have excellent career opportunities.”



## Career Development Discussion

*The five key components of any career development discussion:*

1. Know their values, interests talents, and goals. Questions to ask
  - A. How do you define career development or success?
    - a. Common answers:
      - i. Grow in my effectiveness in current job
      - ii. Promotion in current department (by grade or position)
      - iii. Move to a different department (promotion or lateral move)
      - iv. Create a new job (find a void and fill it)
      - v. Mentor others (new or current peers or direct reports)
  - B. What do you bring to the table that's unique to you?
  - C. What accomplishments do you take the most pride in?
  - D. Which of your values are being met—or not met—here at work?
2. Provide your point of view.
  - A. Share your perspectives on any strength your employee did not bring up.
  - B. Ask, "What do you think would project you forward?"
  - C. Ask, "What do you think would hold you back?"
  - D. Share your perspectives on any developmental needs your employee did not bring up.
3. Discuss trends that may impact their career development.
  - A. Discuss applicable economic and political factors that will affect the industry and/or organization.
  - B. Discuss internal organizational issues, changes, and trends (Examples: The organization is going public, the organization is in acquisition mode, all current managers are new and plan to stay for the long term).
  - C. Discuss trends in the employee's profession (examples: Will there be a different skill set in the profession required five years from now? Is their profession listed in high or low demand?).



4. Explore multiple means of career development, which could include the following:
  - A. Observing or shadowing an expert in an area of interest.
  - B. Informational interviewing within the organization.
  - C. Finding a mentor—or—becoming a mentor.
  - D. Rotating job assignments.
  - E. Taking on special assignments/projects.
  - F. Asking for opportunities to learn parts of the boss's job.
  - G. Attending training programs or classes.
  - H. Developing a reading plan.
  - I. Seeking opportunities to be coached (by boss or others).
  
5. Help Plan—appropriate actions by working with the employee to answer the following questions:
  - A. What is the goal (remember SMART [Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Result-Oriented, and Time-Limited])?
  - B. Who needs to be involved in order for you to meet this goal?
  - C. What experiences do you need to meet this goal?
  - D. What books can you read?
  - E. What training programs might help?
  - F. Who could be a role model/benchmark for you?
  - G. Who at work or in your personal life demonstrates this skill?
  - H. How can you practice?
  - I. What are the obstacles that may get in your way (people, processes, time, self)?



## **Using the Career Discussion Model – Write a Career Development Plan for Yourself OR One of Your Staff**





## HR's Role in Employee Engagement

Ensuring an organization has an engaged workforce is a complex endeavor. While HR cannot be expected to be the sole owner of engagement, HR will most certainly play a key role. Some ways HR can support employee engagement include:

- Hire employees that are a cultural fit for the organization
- Implement effective and meaningful performance feedback systems
- Work with managers and leaders to create a culture of trust and belonging
- Create career development paths
- Offer personal development opportunities
- Consistently measure employee engagement and implement programs to resolve issues
- Connect employees with mentors
- Ensure there are effective two-way communication channels
- Provide training to managers and leaders when needed
- Work with managers to ensure employees understand what is expected of them



## Goals for Change:

List 3 things you learned today that will help you become more effective in your role:

1.

2.

3.

List 2 things you will do differently back at work:

1.

2.

List one 1 thin you will commit to change in the next month:

1.



**Corporate Membership**

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