

Human Experience

Engagement, Performance, Rewards & Recognition



6 KEY EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT TRENDS FOR 2022

- **Anne Maltese**, Director, People Insights,
Quantum Workplace



The Future of Employee Engagement 2021-22

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Leverage these employee engagement best practices to retain top talent

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Debbie McGrath
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Raksha Sanjay Nag
Editor, Human Experience Excellence

The Great Resignation, the Future of Employee Engagement and Work

Dealing with uncertainty, stress, burnout, and isolation have resulted in a drastic dip in employee engagement, leading to the most concerning trend today – the Great Resignation. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, a whopping 4 million people quit their jobs in April alone.

As we start planning for 2022, this is an ideal time to re-evaluate engagement strategies that can help retain employees and keep them happy and productive. However, does a happy or satisfied employee guarantee optimum productivity? How to create more natural human-to-human connections in the workplace? What should employers focus on to prevent the Great Resignation? The November issue of **Human Experience Excellence**, with a special focus on the *future of employee engagement*, includes answers to all these questions and much more.

Also included in this issue is an exclusive study by the HR Research Institute, **The Future of Employee Engagement 2021-22** that sheds light on how organizational practices affect engagement. To learn more about the topic and for strategic outcomes and key takeaways from this exclusive research, please read the complete report [here](#).

Wondering what to prioritize when it comes to employee engagement in 2022? Check out the cover article by Anne Maltese, **6 Key Employee Engagement Trends For 2022**. If you aren't sure where to start in your journey to a highly engaged workforce this year, use these trends as a foundation for building an attractive culture for the future of work.

According to a recent survey, nearly 4 in 10 (38%) said they plan to look for a new job in the next 12 months. So, in a situation like this, how can organizations maintain – and even boost – employee engagement? Derek Irvine's article, **How Recognition And Feedback Can Motivate And Engage Employees In The Post-Pandemic Era** discusses that and more.

Connor Patros' article **Combating The Great Resignation And Addressing America's Mental Health Crisis** helps us understand how addressing America's mental health crisis can pave a way out of this great resignation swamp.

In brief, this edition of Human Experience Excellence includes strategies and tips to deal with the Great Resignation and how and why should organizations start acknowledging the need for better-designed customer engagement programs.

Last but not the least, do not miss [The California HR Excellence Awards](#). Have you been doing some amazing work in HR that you should be recognized for? Do you want to acknowledge a client that you have been working with on a successful HR initiative? It's time to [nominate now!](#)

We hope you enjoy reading all the articles in this issue and do not forget to get back to us with your valuable feedback

Cheers!

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Dave Ulrich

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I have really enjoyed both reading and contributing to HR.com's magazines over the past year. As a scholar-practitioner, it has been a wonderful outlet to share my current academic research with a broader practitioner audience, in a very timely manner. If you want to reskill and upskill your workforce, point them towards the wide array of offerings from HR.com.

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During the COVID pandemic, I have learned that I need a source that provides high-quality, cutting-edge, and timely information on a wide-variety of topics. HR.com's Excellence Publications has been that source for me.

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6 Key Employee Engagement Trends For 2022

Leverage these employee engagement best practices to retain top talent

 By **Anne Maltese**, Quantum Workplace

The ever-changing work environment over the last 18 months has left leaders wondering what to prioritize. Since the start of 2021, many organizations have experienced a dip in employee engagement—and getting to the root of this decline isn't always obvious or easy.

A new [study on employee engagement](#) found that engagement levels have slowly declined month-to-month dropping from 81% in January to 74% in July.

Explore these 6 employee engagement trends to better safeguard your strategies in attracting, engaging, and retaining employees—in 2022 and beyond.

1. Transparency and Communication Around Change

At the height of the pandemic, leaders were at the top of their communication game. A rapidly

dispersed workforce increased the need for business leaders to share information. As a result, leaders communicated about safety and remote work protocols, thoughts related to social justice and racism in the workplace, and perspectives on current and upcoming challenges.

In addition, organizations did a great job listening to their employees. When much of the workforce worked from home and essential workers were separated from their teams, organizations were far more intentional about listening to employee needs. Frequent pulse surveys and 1-on-1s were implemented to capture and respond to real-time employee concerns and perspectives.

While continuous listening and communication might have slowed, the want (and need) for information hasn't. Employees

enjoyed consistent updates from senior leadership, likely because it made them feel more connected to their work, team, and organization.

In January 2021, 78% of employees said they understand why their organization makes changes. However, by July, this figure dropped to 70%. This decline represents possible employee-organization misalignment when it comes to communication around change. This disconnect can negatively impact engagement.

As you enter a new year, prioritize frequent and continuous communication across your organization—even if things are still being decided. Communicate what you know and what is still being worked out. This will help you increase buy-in and understanding of the plans and decisions you make.



And while most messages should come from senior leaders, they can't be the only ones to carry messages throughout your organization. Equip managers to let employees know when and why certain measures are being taken. Greater transparency and information sharing will create greater accountability on all sides.

2. Trust in Senior Leadership

Not unlike transparent communication, trust in leadership plays an important role in driving employee engagement. When employees understand why changes are made, they will feel more confident in leadership's ability to drive future success. Unfortunately, perceptions of leadership have decreased in the second half of 2021.

In December of 2020, about 9 in 10 employees trusted their senior leaders to lead the company to

future success. This boost in trust likely came from an increased opportunity to see leaders as people. Even small gestures like having company-wide meetings via Zoom, which let employees see their leaders' home backgrounds, their kids, and their pets, made leaders more relatable. Employees began to see leaders through a different lens—and that transparency and trust carried over to their work.

Employees also witness leaders navigating massive challenges in 2020. While not every year will present those types of challenges, communicating your progress and being transparent is important to building trust and inspiring confidence.

By May of 2021, trust in leadership declined to only 84%. This change indicates that employees don't feel valued, properly connected,

or lack respect and trust for their leaders, employee engagement declines, and turnover rates grow.

To ensure you are building a culture of trust and respect, evaluate the systems within your organization to boost connection for employees, top to bottom. At the end of the day, a strong culture is built on a foundation of honesty, transparency, and communication.

3. Work-Life Balance and Flexibility

The shift to remote and hybrid work over the last 18 months was the radical change employees needed to better balance work and life. Unlike ever before, employee flexibility has become a critical [driver of employee engagement](#). While employers quickly adopted flexible workplace policies at the start of the pandemic, employee perceptions regarding work-life balance have since declined.



At the start of 2021, 86% of employees agreed that their job gives them the flexibility to meet the needs of both their work and personal lives. Yet by July, this dropped to only 81%.

And while [21% of employees](#) said they would prefer a fully remote work environment, 68% prefer hybrid work and only 11% want to be on-site full time. This should suggest that flexible work environments will continue to be the norm well beyond the pandemic.

It's clear that employees want and need more flexibility at work. But this can mean different things to different people. Flexibility might look like:

- The ability to step out to take a child to school
- Starting the workday earlier to end it earlier
- Taking mental health days

Some roles (like those on customer-facing teams) will naturally have unique challenges in how to offer more work-life balance. But providing this flexibility is table stakes. To retain your top performers in the new year, evaluate your flexible work policies to make sure your offering supports employee flexibility and business success.

4. Employee Health and Wellbeing

To keep employees engaged, organizations need to build an experience that prioritizes their

needs. This includes safeguarding employees' mental and physical health and wellbeing.

In January of 2021, 87% of employees agreed that their company's culture supports its employees' health and wellbeing. This declined to 82% by May. When employees feel like their workloads aren't manageable and support for their mental and physical health is lacking, stress can increase. Elevated stress levels can lead to burnout, disengagement, and even turnover.

Organizations that neglect to promote [employee wellbeing](#) send a message that they don't care for their employees. When this happens, engagement declines, and the success of your business is in jeopardy.

Ensure your culture is magnetic (one that attracts and retains top talent) in 2022 by demonstrating your support for all aspects of employee wellbeing. Provide perks and benefits that attend to all the ways in which employees work. Some examples include:

- Remote work stipends
- Resources to assess sleep and workflow
- Telemedicine
- Mental health benefits
- Paid caregiver leave

5. Employee Recognition

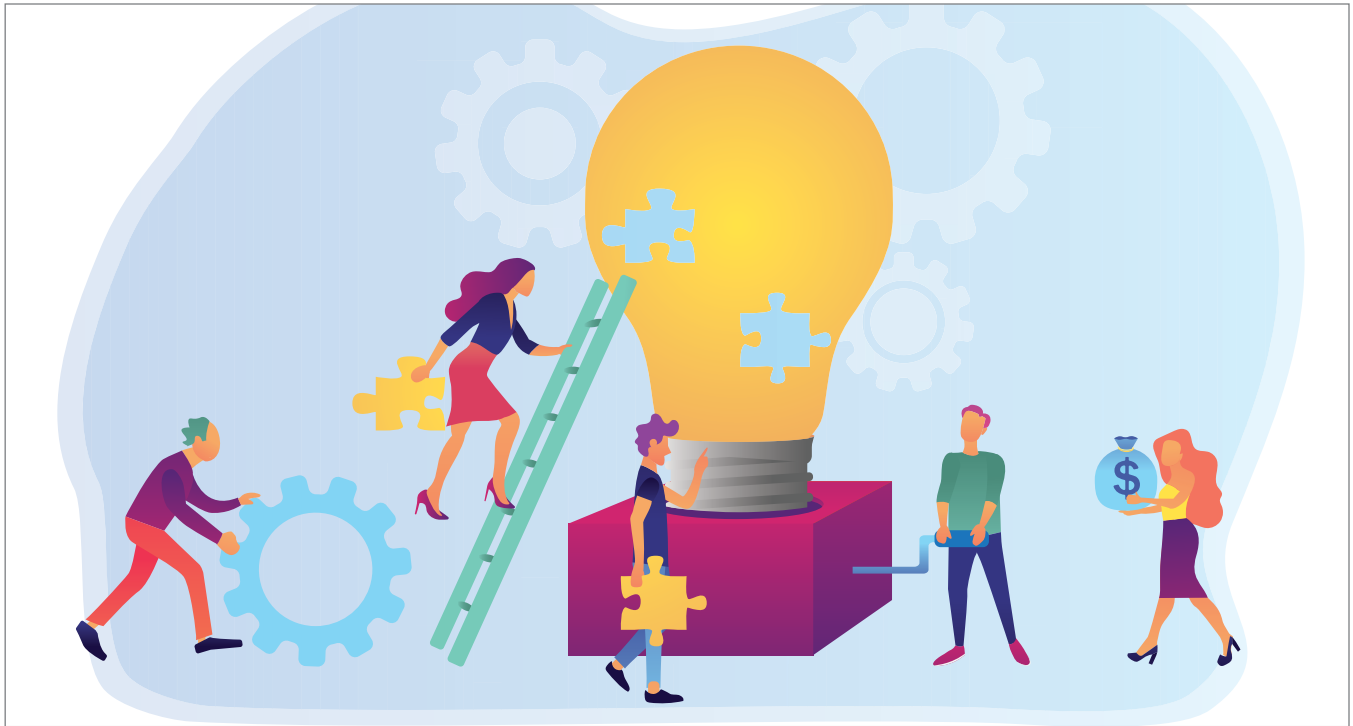
A consistent driver of employee engagement is recognition. When

employees feel valued by their peers, they are driven to perform their best. Yet, when employees don't receive timely recognition, employee engagement and performance decline.

At the end of 2020, perceptions of employee recognition were high. However, by May of 2021, only 72% of employees said they know they would be recognized if they contribute to the organization's success. This decrease suggests that after a year of hardship and hard work, employees still value being heard, seen, and appreciated.

Lack of recognition negatively impacts employee confidence, which is needed for employees to perform successfully. Organizations need to make sure employees feel valued and recognized. Otherwise, employees may feel like their role and effort are less important than those on-site. After all, humans have a fundamental need to feel valued, have meaning and purpose, and feel that our work is contributing to something larger.

Help employees feel valued by fostering an environment that celebrates success all the time. And make recognition personalized for your team. Employ better 1-on-1s, spend time in team meetings to celebrate recent wins, and find ways to activate day-to-day recognition—especially in dispersed work environments.



6. Career Growth and Development

Career growth and development opportunities are essential to engaging and retaining your high performers. Without the opportunity for growth, employees can feel stagnant and unwilling to perform at their highest potential.

At the start of 2021, 78% of employees agreed they saw career growth and development opportunities for themselves at work. However, by May 2021 this figure decreased to 72%. A lack of clear growth may drive employees to search for other jobs which negatively impacts your retention rates. When organizations invest in their employees, they become workplaces that employees want to work for long-term.

Investing in your employees' careers is a primary way to

compete for talent. But career growth and development doesn't mean putting everyone in a management role—it should be aligned with the employees' career aspirations.

Prioritize frequent one-on-ones to understand what your employees want in their careers and use a variety of development opportunities to close internal skill gaps. Revisit mentorships, upskilling, career paths, and stretch assignments. Regardless of what you choose, be sure career growth and development are accessible and equitable for all employees.

Your 2022 Takeaway

Work, as we once knew, has been forever changed. The unique events of the last year and a half have prompted workplaces to better understand what drives employee engagement. If you

aren't sure where to start in your journey to a highly engaged workforce this year, use these trends as a foundation for building an attractive culture for the future of work.



Anne Maltese is the Director of People Insights at Quantum Workplace and leads Quantum Workplace's team of subject matter experts on employee engagement and performance.



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Submit Your Articles

4 Global Talent Acquisition Trends to Watch

The COVID-19 pandemic forced most organizations to change the way they attract, hire, develop, and retain their people, while at the same time adapting to a different, more flexible ways of working.

As more employees are vaccinated and we begin to emerge from various global lockdowns, businesses need to incorporate new approaches to recruiting. Here are some of the trends TA and HR professionals need to embrace moving forward:

1. Retention

The big question facing most organizations will be how to retain the talent they have. One potential problem is that the growth of remote and hybrid working means a much broader range of talent is now available to organizations across geographical regions and even countries.

Projects can be fulfilled from any location. While this might give access to a much wider talent pool to recruit from, it also means companies might find their employees have a wider range of opportunities to investigate.

2. Talent mobility

It follows that one of the biggest trends post-pandemic, and one that will help greatly with retention, is likely to be an increase in talent mobility within organizations.

The best way to retain your people is to offer opportunities for learning, development, and growth, which can be enabled through internal mobility. For some businesses this will mean a cultural shift, with leaders open to their top performers taking on new challenges within the organization, and a technological shift that gives insight into all the capabilities and vacancies within the business.

3. Virtual hiring

Candidates and talent acquisition teams alike have embraced new approaches such as video interviewing and assessments. And many jobseekers feel comfortable joining businesses and teams they haven't met or visited in real life.

However, video calls are not without their problems when compared to face-to-face interviews. They require greater focus and effort in processing non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, body language, and the pitch and tone of voices.

4. Candidate experience

The most crucial part of recruitment is the candidate experience. In fact, LinkedIn found 87% of candidates with a positive interview experience will change their mind about a company or role that they had viewed negatively.

Candidates expect a seamless and intuitive journey when applying for roles. Unsurprisingly, candidate experience is one area TA teams most want to improve. Taking a more scientific approach to improving this can help, particularly by using technology to automate key parts of the process such as interview scheduling and providing timely and informative feedback.

Time will tell if predictions of a talent exodus become a reality. Regardless, all of our businesses need to embrace technology to create better processes and experiences that will help attract and retain the talent we need.

[Learn more](#)



Mervyn Dinnen is an HR and talent analyst, researching the emerging trends that impact hiring, development, and retention. He is author of the books "Exceptional Talent" and "Digital Talent."



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Uncertain times call for certain workforce strategies.

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Creating Lasting Relationships At Work

A different perspective on employee engagement

 By **Lisa Reinhardt**, CCS Companies

I believe in loyalty. I believe in commitment. I believe in long-term relationships. I'm talking about my career.

When it comes to relationships, the most difficult one to manage is the relationship that exists between an employee and the company they work for.

I can't remember the last resume I read that showed more than a couple of years with one company. The engagement doesn't last for long.

Employee engagement is most commonly referred to as the emotional connection an employee feels toward the company they work for, the people they work with, and the work that they perform. That connection doesn't seem to be as strong as it used to be.

Years ago, employees made long-term commitments to the company they worked for. Many people made a commitment to stay with one company until retirement. Where has that level of commitment gone?

There are two definitions of engagement that we don't often think of when talking about employee engagement: a formal agreement to get married, and an arrangement to do something or go somewhere at a fixed time.

I think both of the definitions should be associated with employee engagement, though. After all, we are asking the employee to make a formal commitment to remain at their job, and to perform their duties each day. If we treat the commitment to a job like the commitment needed to make a relationship work, we might be able to increase employee engagement along the way.

It starts out with a phone call – the phone screen – the getting-to-know-you phase. If all goes well, you agree to meet in person for face-to-face interview. The candidate and the employer both work hard to impress each other. When the job offer is accepted, the engagement begins.

What you do from this point forward will impact how long that engagement lasts.

Below are some simple ways leaders can help make employee engagement last.

Open and Honest Communication

For the relationship between the employee and the company (or between the employee and their manager) to work, there has to be open and honest communication. Transparency is key – no secrets!

Don't go home angry, talk it out, to work it out.



Trust

Trust is integral to the success of any relationship, and that includes the relationships we establish at work. Maintain confidentiality when needed, follow through on promises, admit when you're wrong, don't play favorites, and don't play mind games.

Flexibility

In every relationship, there has to be some give and take. Make concessions, be willing to change, and be open to seeing things from others' perspectives. Your way is not the only way to do things.

Respect

Show that you respect the individual, and that you value them as a person, and that you value the contributions they make to the company.

Collaboration

Work together to accomplish goals. Being part of a team instills a sense of belonging. Learn from each other, leverage each other's strengths and compensate for each other's areas for improvement.

Celebration

Take the time to celebrate successes and accomplishments, together. Don't take all the credit – give credit where credit is due.

If we only worked as hard at the relationships we establish with the company we work for, and the people we work with, as we do on those relationships we maintain outside of work, engagement levels could increase dramatically.

So, next time you have a new employee start on your team, or have a current employee who seems disconnected, remember to practice some of the behaviors listed above. Put the extra effort into making the engagement last.



Lisa Reinhardt is the Senior Manager of Learning and Organizational Development at the CCS Companies. With over 21 years of experience in L&D, Lisa has a successful track record of diagnosing, developing, and implementing relevant, innovative learning solutions aligned to business strategies. She demonstrates a passion and drive to help individuals and organizations reach their full potential and achieve their goals. Lisa's dedication to the professional and personal development of others is her driving force. Lisa is a member of NEHRA, ATD, and SHRM. Her certifications include: Korn Ferry Voices 360, MBTI, Situational Leadership II, and Social Style.



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Have you been doing some amazing work in HR that you should be recognized for? Do you want to acknowledge a client that you have been working with on a successful HR initiative?

[HR West](#) is bringing back [The California HR Excellence Awards](#) and it's time to nominate your program! The 2nd annual awards will celebrate successes in HR on the west coast and recognize companies and individuals across the entire spectrum of human resources. These awards acknowledge an industry fostered by leadership, service, innovation, support, and principle, which have continuously driven us forward.

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Winners will be announced at the Awards Ceremony on the last day of [HR West](#) taking place March 8-9, 2022 in-person in Oakland, California and also virtually. HR West is the leading conference in California for forward-thinking HR professionals seeking leading-edge professional development, HR solutions, and connections with peers.

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Best Wellness Program
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3 Areas Employers Should Focus On To Prevent The “Great Resignation”

Why every moment is an opportunity to improve employee experience at work

 By **Marc Gingras**, WorkForce Software

An organization is more than a business. It's a collection of people — with personal motivations and aspirations — who unite around a shared purpose.

People form the backbone of any organization. But for some, each day is filled with long and inflexible hours, a lack of interaction between co-workers, little direction from superiors, and outdated technology that makes doing their jobs harder. And when that happens, people grow disconnected and are more prone to quit.

In April 2021, more than four million people quit their jobs in the U.S., kickstarting what's been called the “Great Resignation.” And, according to recent surveys, over 41% of employees are considering leaving their jobs this year.

With workers resigning in search of a better work/life balance, higher pay, and more flexibility, employers need to make staff feel heard, valued, and productive.

Doing that begins with a renewed focus on employee experience.

Employee experience initiatives produce happier, more engaged employees who can get work done more efficiently, resulting in higher productivity, lower turnover, and greater job satisfaction, among other benefits.

And, as McKinsey has previously pointed out, employee experience isn't about “free sushi for lunch.” Rather, it's all the elements, both big and small — like the culture, technology, and physical environment provided by an employer — that shape an employee's experience, day in and day out.



That’s why, in WorkForce Software’s new employee experience guide, [Making Every Moment Matter](#), we looked at the forces impacting employee experience in today’s workplaces and spoke with experts (including [Jacob Morgan](#), author of *‘The Employee Experience Advantage’*, who says that employee experience is no longer a nice-to-have, but a “must-have, especially now”) to help employers identify where their employee experience initiatives are falling short.

Here are three areas employers should focus on to prevent the “Great Resignation” from reaching their workplaces.

#1 - Enable a Better Work/Life Balance by Giving Employees More Control of their Schedules

Creating a balance between the needs of an organization and employees’ ideal working scenarios can be difficult.

But employers who prioritize a strong work/life balance cite improvements to employees’ mental

health (23% increase), personal health (17%), and performance (21%) compared to organizations who don’t provide similar levels of support.

To enable a better work/life balance, employers should improve labor planning processes through fair and predictive scheduling, allow staff to communicate their work preferences, and utilize self-service technology, so employees feel more in control of their schedules and scan swap shifts or initiate time-off requests more easily.

#2 - Streamline Communication to Foster a More Connected Employee Experience

Everything from setting clear expectations, providing access to relevant information and documentation, and offering ongoing support and feedback are integral to getting work done each day. If communications aren’t clear, even the most straightforward tasks can be hard to complete or seem confusing, affecting workers’ overall employee experience.



To set employees up for success wherever they work, employers should provide guidance and set the right expectations by assigning and prioritizing tasks with clear deadlines and instructions, making information that’s relevant to their roles easier to access, and centralizing communications so employees can share information, solicit feedback, and ask for advice from peers and managers.

#3 - Capitalize on the Moments that Matter in Each Employee’s Workday

Each day is filled with moments and interactions that shape an employee’s overall experience at an organization. Understanding what matters to employees can help employers build a culture of

caring and loyalty that results in higher levels of productivity and job satisfaction.

Although once reserved for quarterly and annual performance reviews, surveys are increasingly being used by modern employers to surface timely, contextually relevant, and personal responses from employees about their day-to-day experiences.

By leveraging tools for sentiment analysis, employers and managers can gain tailored insights into the individual moments that have a lasting impact and affect each employee’s unique experience at an organization — and even identify when they may be prone to burnout or churn — and assist managers in preventing any issues before they occur or get worse.

A Job is More Than a Paycheck

The relationship between employees, managers, and employers has evolved from a purely transactional one to something more complex and nuanced — especially over the past year and a half.

These days, [flexible work schedules, support and recognition from superiors, opportunities for career growth, and modern, consumer-grade technology](#) are as important to each employee’s experience and employee retention as the pay they receive.

When employers focus on improving employee experience, work can become more than a job or even a calling — it can become a beautiful place to be.

...



Marc Gingras is the SVP, Employee Experience Strategy at WorkForce Software. His work has been published in Entrepreneur, the Hill Times, and the Globe and Mail, among other notable publications.



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The Future of Employee Engagement 2021-22



Determine which of your talent management policies are truly driving employee engagement



More than ever before, employers must understand how they can best partner with their employees to achieve business goals. The HR Research Institute conducted a study of HR professionals to understand *what* the state of employee engagement is today and to identify *how* organizational practices affect engagement.

Based on our previous work,¹ for the purpose of this study, we define employee engagement as:

- Employees' willingness to give their best at work, and
- Employees' emotional commitment to the organization and its goals

Key Findings

- Employee engagement levels are in greater flux than they were two years ago, and many organizations continue to suffer low levels of engagement

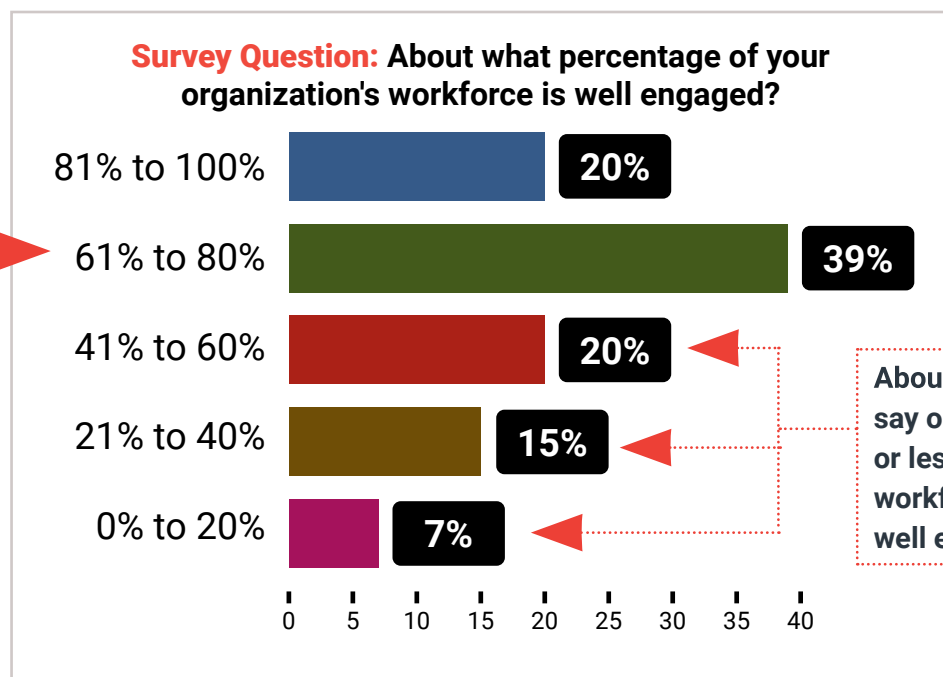
- Companies recognize there is value in employee engagement but often fail to prioritize it
- Although a majority measure engagement in their organizations, more than a third do not, and there is no consensus about the best ways of measuring it
- Many managers lack appropriate training to coach and develop employees and move toward a more positive working culture

How Engaged Are Today's Employees?

As shown below, only a fifth of respondents say that 81% to 100% of their workforce is well engaged, although another two-fifths say 61% to 80% of their workforce is well engaged. The remaining two-fifths state that 60% or less of the workforces in their organizations are well engaged, indicating that engagement remains an issue for many companies today.



The plurality indicates that 61% to 80% of their workforce is well engaged



We asked whether employee engagement levels had risen or fallen over the last two years and found that respondents were more likely to say engagement levels have risen (52%) than fallen (31%). However, the most important finding is that only 18% say engagement has not changed in either direction.

Who Is Responsible for Employee Engagement?

Considering that most employees spend time interacting with direct supervisors, it makes sense that the largest percentage of participants (72%) indicate that direct supervisors are responsible to a high or very high degree for employee engagement.

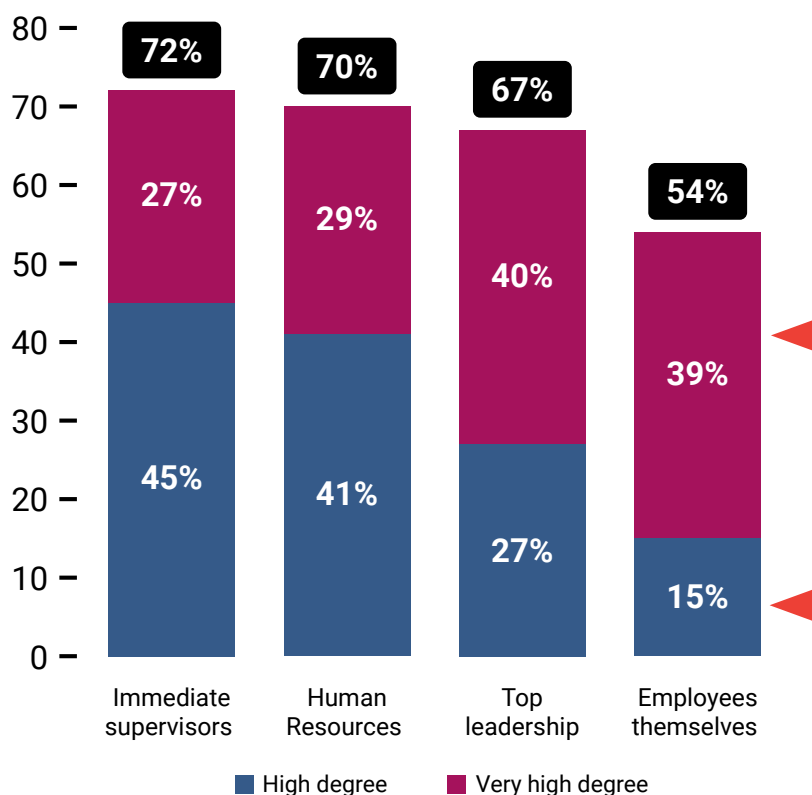
What's interesting, however, is that HR is now slightly more likely than top leadership (70% vs. 67%) to be viewed as responsible for engagement.





A little over half indicate employees themselves bear high levels of responsibility for engagement

Survey Question: To what degree are the following groups responsible for improving employee engagement in your organization?



More than half (54%) say employees bear a high or very high degree of responsibility for engagement. This raises the question of whether employees will bear greater responsibility for their engagement in the future if a larger proportion continue to work from home.

What Are the Benefits of Employee Engagement?

As shown below, 76% of HR professionals think improved levels of engagement will result, to a high or very high degree, in better customer service. At the same time, they are nearly as likely to say that better engagement will, to a high or very high

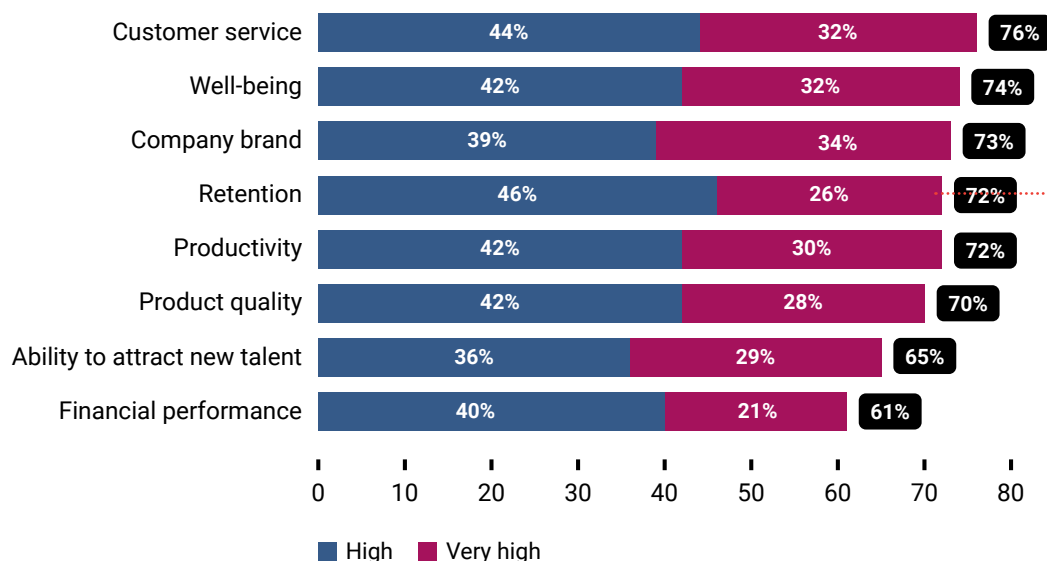
degree, lead to more positive well-being, company branding, retention, and productivity.



Survey Question: In your organization, to what degree do higher rates of engagement have a positive impact on the following areas?



Twenty-six percent indicate employee engagement has a **very high degree** of impact on retention



Further, 91% believe that there is solid evidence linking engagement to performance. That is, higher engagement is associated with better performance and lower engagement with lower performance.

But most also believe that the directionality runs both ways. That is, 82% think performance leads to engagement as much as engagement drives performance.

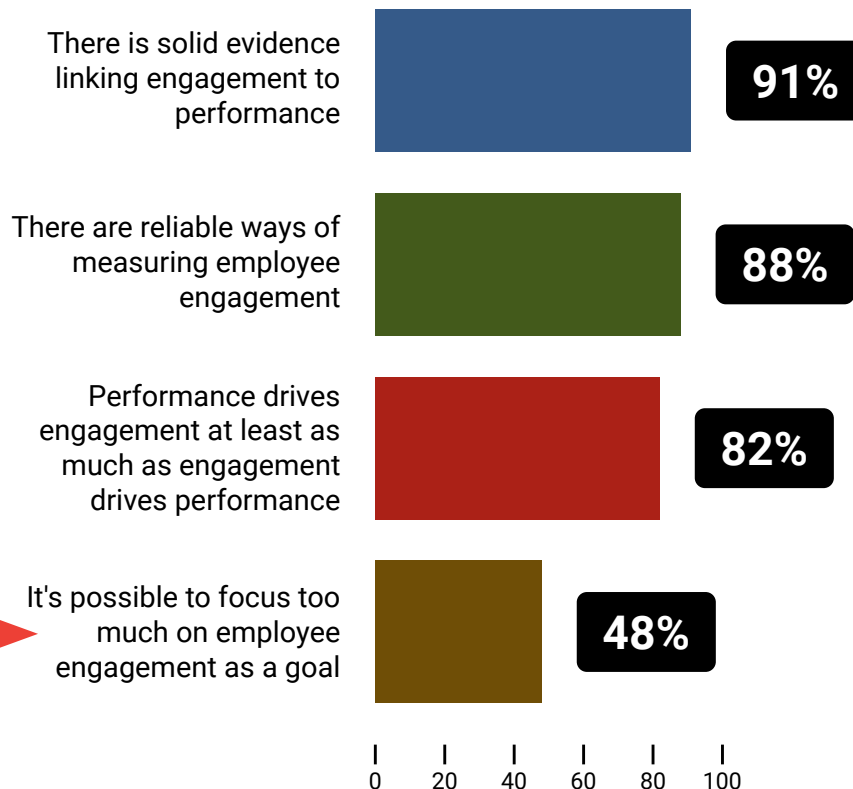




Forty-eight percent think it is possible to focus too much on employee engagement

Survey Question: Please rate the following statements as true or false:

Percent responding true



Are Companies Measuring Engagement, and How Do They Measure It?

The majority (88%) of respondents say they have reliable ways of measuring employee engagement. Only 64%, however, actually measure it in their organizations. Perhaps some believe measurement is unnecessary or do not feel they have the resources to acquire good metrics.

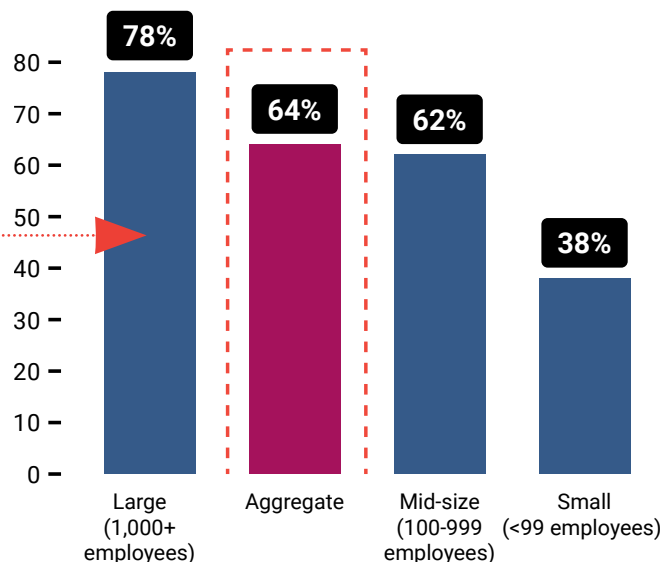
Large (78%) and mid-size (62%) organizations are far more likely than smaller organizations (38%) to measure engagement. Perhaps leaders of smaller organizations feel that they are in touch with their employees and do not need surveys or other measurements to tell them what they already know. Of course, others may suspect that engagement is low and do not want to call attention to it.



Generally speaking, larger organizations tend to measure more than small and mid-sized ones

Survey Question: Does your organization measure employee engagement?

Percent responding yes



Organizations that measure engagement are most likely to look to performance-related metrics. When we asked how they measure engagement, the top two answers are:

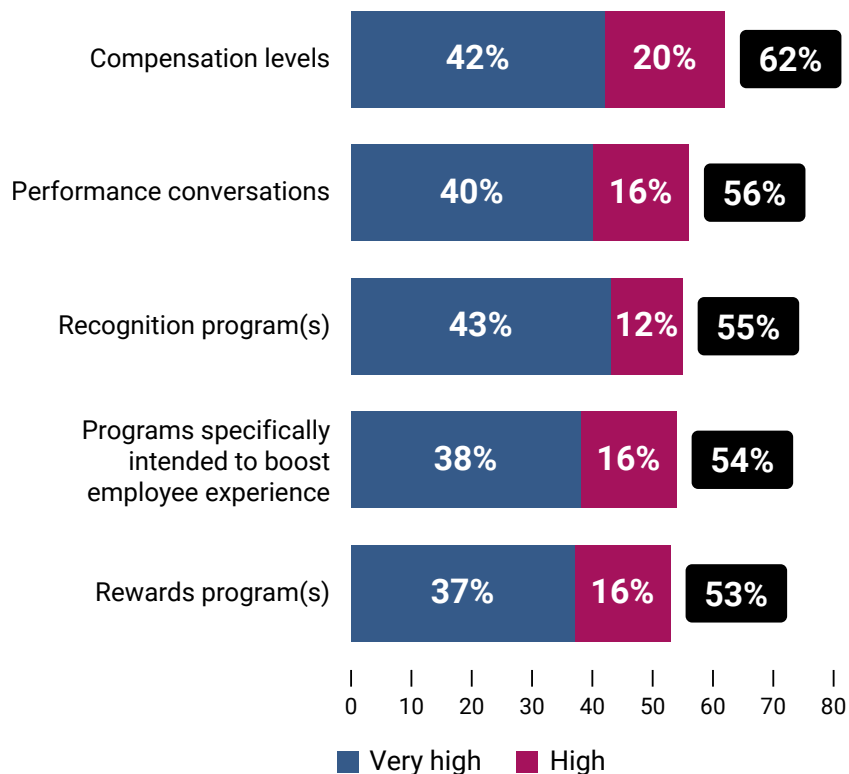
- performance management system (53%)
- employee productivity (49%)

What Factors Influence Employee Engagement?

When asked HR professionals to identify the

degree to which certain factors drive employee engagement and only 29% indicate that compensation is among the factors most highly linked to engagement. compensation may not be among the issues most highly associated with engagement, but that does not mean that compensation has no influence on engagement. Indeed, as we see here, three-fifths believe it affects engagement to a high or very high degree. This is higher than for performance conversations, recognition programs, and even programs specifically intended to boost the employee experience.


Survey Question: To what degree do the following factors drive employee engagement in your organization? (please provide your best guess)





Note

¹ HR.com's HR Research Institute. (2019, May). *The State of Employee Engagement 2019*. Retrieved from https://www.hr.com/en/resources/free_%20research_white_papers/hrcom-employee-engagement-may-2019-research_jwb9ckus.html

To learn more about **The Future of Employee Engagement 2021-22** research, please download the complete report here: 

The Future of Employee Engagement 2021-22



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Why Your Best Employees Are Leaving And How To Stop It

 **Fresia Jackson**, Culture Amp



Turnover: it's an important metric for any organization's health and one that executives across the business often scrutinize. If you feel confused answering questions like, "why are employees leaving," you're not alone. It's hard to know what's right when the research is flip-flopping, suggesting one minute that [employees leave because of managers](#), and the next, [that's not the case](#). We at Culture Amp have even weighed in on this [debate](#) in the past. If your head is spinning, don't worry. Ours was, too.

So, we undertook our largest study on employee turnover to date, aiming to provide some much-needed context around these challenging questions. We found that:

- There are 3 key reasons employees leave
- When it comes to keeping managers, inclusion is most important
- Employees that you want to keep most are more likely to be vocal about their dissatisfaction
- If you want to predict who is going to leave, you should just ask them

To discover these insights, we analyzed the survey responses of over 300,000 employees who voluntarily exited over the 15 months prior to COVID. We compared both their exit survey responses as well as their engagement survey responses before leaving. Then we incorporated other characteristics we knew about the individuals, like their tenure, manager status, and if the People team considered their exit to be regrettable. We busted some long-established myths – no, employees don't leave because of managers – and found insights that no one has reported on before. Now, let's dive in.



There Are 3 Common Reasons Employees Leave

When comparing those who left to those who stayed, there were three key reasons they left:

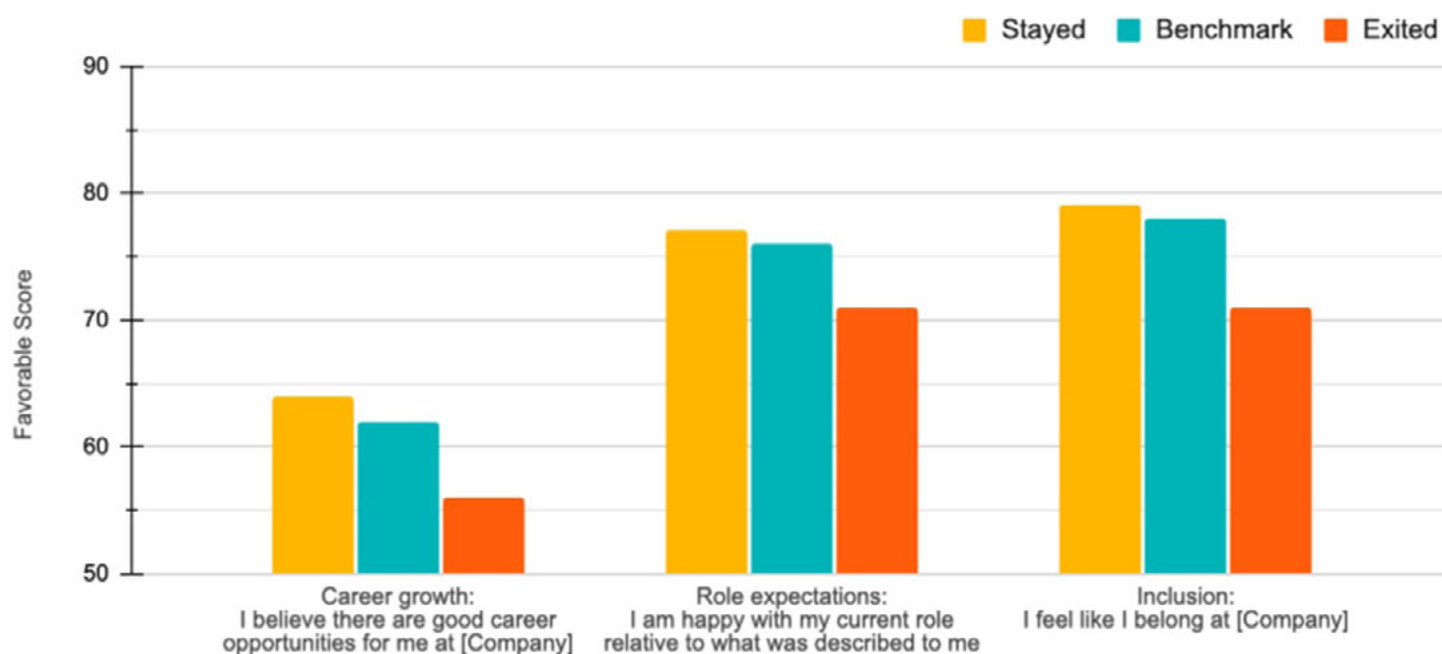
- **Career growth:** Employees who left were less favorable on the question “I believe there are good career opportunities for me at [Company].” Additionally, a lack of Growth (in their career or development opportunities) was selected by 1 in 3 employees as a top reason for leaving at the time of exit.
- **Role expectations:** Unsurprisingly, they were also less favorable when asked if “I am happy with my role relative to what was described to me.”
- **Inclusion:** Those who left were less likely to feel like they belonged at the organization.

On average, those who left were 7 points lower on these questions than those who stayed on.

- **Insight:** Your employees are likely not leaving because of their manager, but rather because they feel like they aren’t growing, their role is misaligned, or they don’t feel included at the company.



Favorable Scores: Stayed vs Exited



The Same Reasons Were Cited by the Employees You Want to Keep Most

While turnover is always difficult, we recognize that not all turnover is created equal. So we looked at 3 key attributes (tenure, manager status, and if their exit was marked as regrettable) to identify employees who have the largest impact when they leave. For each, the same 3 questions mentioned above came up front and center, with a few notable differences.

Career Growth Was Important No Matter the Tenure

When your most tenured employees leave, they take years of historical knowledge with them, making their departures particularly difficult. Some might assume the need for growth changes over an employee's tenure. But by looking at the reason cited by employees at the time of exit, we found growth was the number one reason across all tenure groups. This was true for early leavers (those who left in under 1 year), tenured folks (those who stayed for over 4 years), and the in-betweeners. Importantly, growth meant a range of things, not only formal role progression. Many employees cited learning and development opportunities and the desire for stretch projects.

- **Insight:** *To keep your employees, no matter the tenure, determine what growth means for each of them.*

To Keep Managers, Make Sure They Feel Included

When a manager leaves, it can completely change the dynamic of their team. And it can take longer to hire their replacement than it would for an individual contributor. We found that for managers,

the Inclusion aspect was even more important. Managers who left were:

- 9 points lower on "When I share my opinion, it is valued" than managers who stayed
- 11 points lower on "Perspectives like mine are included in decision-making at [Company]"

Perhaps this is because of the classic [middle management paradox](#): managers need to lead and follow. If they don't feel they can be a good representative or taken seriously while advocating for their team, they choose to go somewhere else.

- **Insight:** *To stop manager turnover, be sure to ask managers (and everyone!) if they feel like they have a voice and are included in decision-making.*

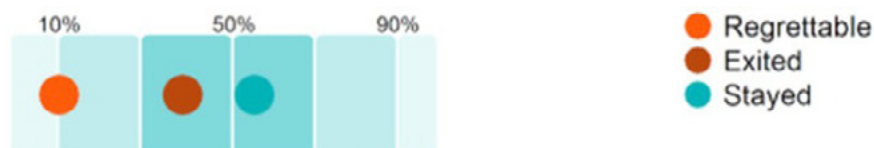
Employees Whose Exit Was Marked as "Regrettable" Were Even More Honest

For about 10,000 employees, the People team had flagged their exit as "regrettable." This definition varies by company but generally means the individual was high-performing and the company wishes they could have retained them. Surprisingly, we found that these employees were much more honest in their dissatisfaction than those who exited and were not marked regrettable – a full 10 points lower in overall favorability.

In the table below, you can see this pattern for the 3 main drivers of attrition. The favorable scores of employees marked as regrettable exits were low enough to be placed within the bottom 10th percentile of our global benchmark data.

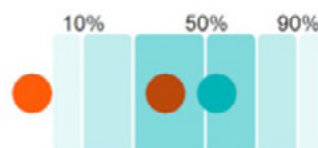
Career growth

I believe there are good career opportunities for me at [Company]



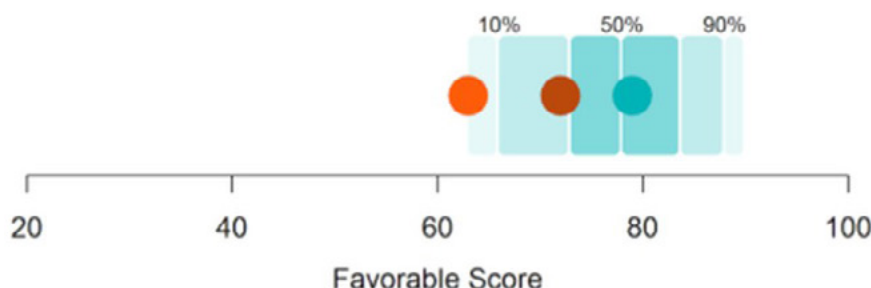
Role expectations:

I am happy with my current role relative to what was described to me



Inclusion:

I feel like I belong at [Company]



- **Insight:** If you have low scores on your Engagement survey, it can be easy to question who the unfavorable folks are. This research indicates they might be the very employees you most want to keep!

- And even those who were neutral were 50% more likely to leave than those who agreed.

This result is consistent with our [2017 findings](#).

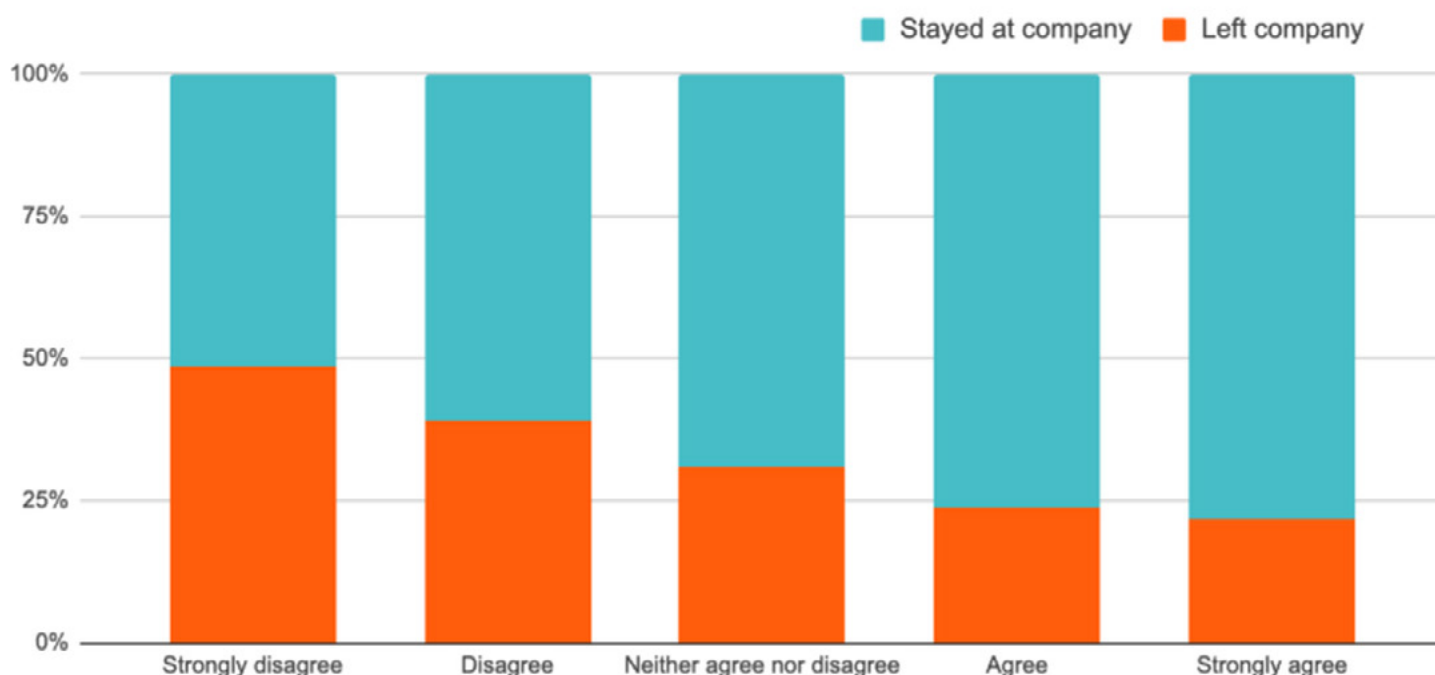
The Best Way to Predict Who Is Going to Leave? Just Ask Them

Of all the questions we looked at, the most predictive by far was our future commitment item – “I see myself still working at [Company] in two years’ time.”

- Those who strongly disagreed were 2.7x more likely to leave than those who selected other response options. This effect was twice as strong for regrettable exits since they are more honest about their intentions!
- Those who disagreed were ~2x times more likely to leave than those who were neutral or agreed.



I see myself still working at [Company] in two years' time



- **Insight:** Asking your employees if they intend to stay at the company is the best way to predict attrition. Use the proportions above for a rough forecast.

Employees Will Also Tell You Why They Plan to Leave

In our exit survey, employees are asked for the top reason they chose to leave. We found the reason selected at the time of exit was highlighted in their Engagement survey responses months before.

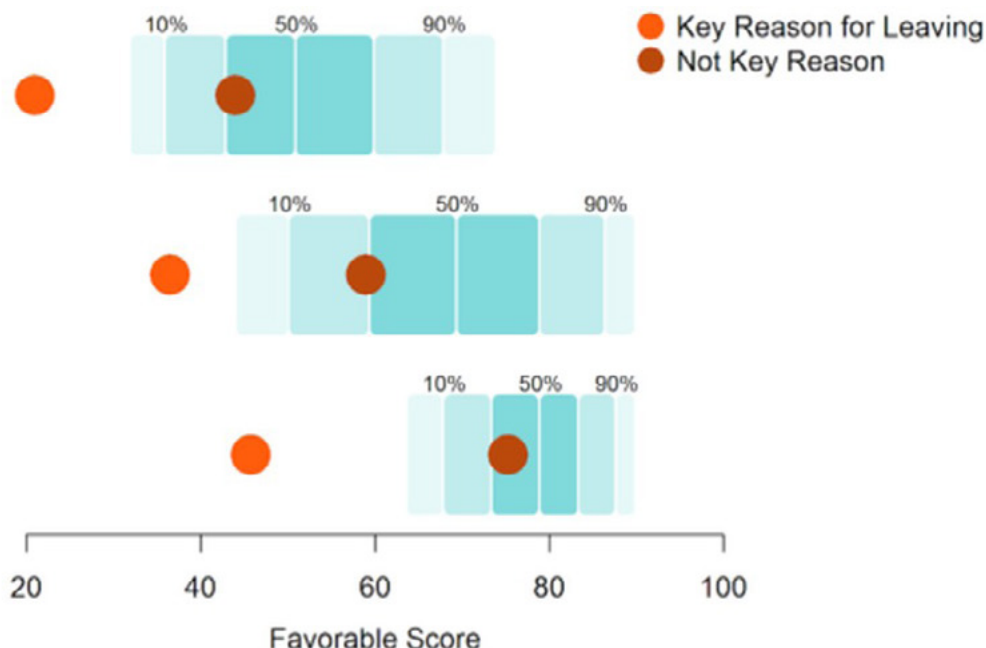
- Regrettable employees who selected “Manager” as their key reason for leaving scored below the bottom 5th percentile on the Management factor in their Engagement response. This was a full 29 points below regrettable employees who did not name their manager as a reason for leaving.

- Similarly, employees who selected “Leadership” as their key reason for leaving scored below the bottom 5th percentile on the Leadership factor.
- A similar signal was found within the compensation question “I believe my total compensation is fair, relative to similar roles at other companies”



Compensation:

I believe my total compensation is fair, relative to similar roles at other companies



- **Insight:** *If employees are vocal about their dissatisfaction on particular topics and the problem isn't addressed, they will leave because of it.*

Take Your First Step

Based on our research, you can be confident that:

- Your employees will tell you **if** they're planning to leave
- They'll let you know **why** they're planning to leave
- The employees you most want to keep (regrettable exits) are even more honest with their feedback

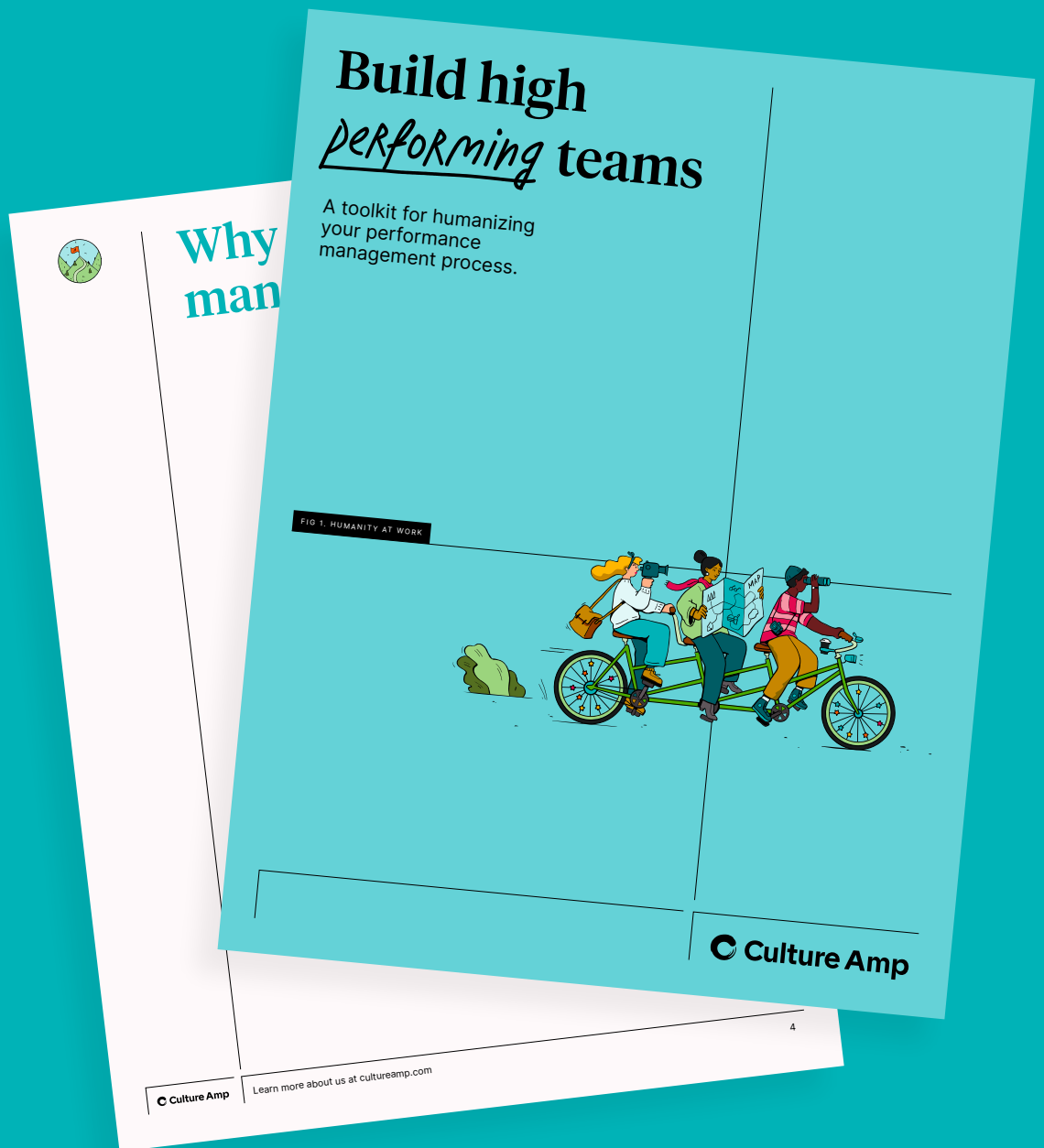
However, our research was easy since employees were flagged as regrettable by the People team. Unfortunately, this only happens once an employee leaves. To get ahead of the curve:



Humanize the performance management process

Boost engagement, raise morale, and elevate the overall employee experience with a performance management process that speaks to your unique culture and people.

Get the toolkit



1. Include performance rating as a filter in your Engagement survey results so that you can see how your high-performing employees' experiences may differ.
2. Be sure to ask the most predictive questions. Both by asking directly, "I see myself still working at [Company] in two years' time," and indirectly by covering Career growth, Role expectations, and Inclusion.

At Culture Amp, much of these insights around engagement-related turnover are already embedded within our product. We do the heavy lifting to make it easy for you to identify turnover risks and improve their experience before it's too late.

...



Fresia Jackson is the Lead Research People Scientist at Culture Amp.



▶ Would you like to comment?

If you do, you just might be able to stop your high-performing employees before they make that pivotal decision.



Why Everything You Know About Employee Engagement Is Wrong

 **Dr. Dan Harrison**, Harrison Assessments



If your employees are less than engaged at work, you might just be making these common mistakes.

One of the biggest lessons you probably learned in 2020 was that employee engagement matters. According to the American Productivity Audit, employees who aren't present at work cost companies more than \$225 billion a year. When the global health crisis hit and forced workers to go remote, employee engagement mistakes became obvious as companies navigated the changing landscape.

After the shift to remote work, many companies prioritized their employee engagement programs as a way to ensure employee health and wellbeing were at the center of their talent management strategy. For instance, Zoom expanded its employee wellness benefits and tasked its volunteer "happy crew" to provide employees with virtual events. As a result, the Drucker Institute ranked Zoom the highest for employee engagement and development in its Management Top 250 ranking.

Although companies like Zoom mastered how to improve employee engagement, others completely missed the mark. How? By failing to measure employee engagement at all (a mistake 46 percent of companies made in 2019, according to HR.com research) or by measuring it on a group level. If you're examining your entire workforce, you might understand engagement trends and pain points. But that won't provide actionable data that helps you meaningfully address a lack of engagement at the individual level, which is most important for productivity.

A New Approach to Getting Employees Engaged

The global health crisis and resulting shift to remote work had a silver lining: Leaders began to understand the importance of employee engagement in ways they never did before. In 2020, lockdowns made it impossible for most leaders to observe employee engagement or productivity the old-fashioned way. This forced them to revisit their perspectives.

During a 2020 roundtable discussion, which involved 15 virtual meetings with 150 chief human resources officers from large companies, Gallup discovered that the crisis changed the way CHROs think about engagement and productivity. CHROs realized that they were making critical employee engagement mistakes, so they abandoned their obsession with performance to instead focus on trust.

Many leaders are now beginning to consider what employee engagement means for their business. Rather than think of employee engagement as a group concept heavily influenced by the manager, they are realizing it is an individual state of mind. Being engaged is a psychological phenomenon that is driven by employee expectations and motivations as well as good leadership and management practices. It requires the employer to take interest in what the employee cares about and what they enjoy doing. Ensuring an employee's interests and enjoyment are aligned to the role they have is key, particularly in a job market where talent is hard to find. The New York Times reported that employers added 916,000 jobs in March 2021, so job seekers can be more selective and choose employers that prioritize well-being and purpose.

How to Improve Employee Engagement in 2021

By taking the time to understand individual employees' expectations, needs, rites and aspirations, you shift the power dynamic. High individual engagement and productivity result in a win-win situation for both the employee and employer. A lack of engagement isn't always

obvious when you measure at a group level, so stop making the same mistakes and focus on truly getting employees engaged:

1. Connect employees' needs to your company's objectives

If you want to learn how to improve employee engagement, evaluate employees on an individual basis. One-size-fits-all solutions will only work for a percentage of your workforce. However, an individual approach will ensure workers have what they need to feel connected and important to your company as a whole. You can achieve this by forming a connection point between what employees need and what your business hopes to achieve.

According to the Achievers 2020 Culture Report, employees who feel connected to their company's values are five times more likely to feel engaged at work. Try having a conversation from the top down about how each person contributes to your company's goals. At the global nonprofit WaterAid, for instance, board members work together to boost employee engagement through regular conversations with executives and staff about how each employee can achieve the organization's vision.

2. Remember the two sides of employee engagement

Most business leaders rely on middle management to ensure employees are engaged in their work, but engagement at work is impacted by many different factors. That's why an individualized approach is needed that relies on both the manager and employee.



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At the end of the day, it's not just up to the manager to engage employees. It's a dual effort. Putting the responsibility entirely on managers doesn't take into consideration the various individual expectations an employee must achieve. For example, managers can't encourage employees to prioritize their wellbeing without giving them ample time to do so. The manager and employee must work together to first boost engagement and then drive business results. Accounting firm PwC encourages its employees to add wellness to their performance goals. Employees will track their progress with their managers, who hold them accountable for taking a certain number of vacation days planned, for example.

3. Ask your employees about their professional expectations and measure their level of fulfillment

Now that you understand the role workers play, you need to ask the right employee engagement questions. What are their most important professional goals? Are the goals fulfilled in their current role? If not, are the goals realistic? Does the employee possess the behaviors necessary for success, and does the company have a matching opportunity? Talking to individual employees about their professional expectations and any potential

challenges will help you identify the unique behaviors that drive engagement, productivity and retention.

Take advancement, for example. Many employees expect to advance within their companies, but advancement looks different to every person. You can find out what advancement means to each employee by simply asking. Once you know what they expect, you can determine if there's room for growth based on the position and employee's behavior. Through conversation, you can create a mutually beneficial dialogue about alignment between employment expectations and company objectives. Plus, employees who feel heard are 4.6 times more likely to perform at their best, according to Salesforce.

Increasing employee engagement has been a topic of conversation for many years, but 2020 placed it front and center. Now, employers are actively talking with individual employees about engagement — and fulfillment — at work. You can avoid making the same age-old mistakes by using these three employee engagement best practices.

...



Dr. Dan Harrison is the Founder and CEO of Harrison Assessments. The company's award-winning, cloud-based technology provides secure, job-specific predictive analytics that enhance the candidate and employee experience and save HR professionals and managers time and money.



► Would you like to comment?



The Integral Link Between Employee Engagement And Mental Health

The best way to increase employee engagement



 **Haeli Harris, Nivati**

Engagement is suffering because employers are focusing on the wrong thing.

4-day work weeks, PTO, and employee recognition only go so far.

Of course, these things can help engagement - but they do not get to the source of the problem.

Employee engagement is directly coordinated with employee mental health. [60%](#) of employees would feel more motivated and connected if their employer took action to support their mental health.

With more and more people struggling with stress, burnout, and anxiety since early 2020, employers need to adapt to the changing emotional needs of their people.

Employers have an opportunity to be a part of the solution. When companies care for the whole employee, their wellness will improve, and so will employee engagement. It is the company's job to help the team adjust to new workplace challenges.

Adjusting to New Workplace Needs

[80%](#) of employees are unengaged at work. Why? Remote work is isolating, and in-office work can be mind-numbing.

Remote work can lead to:

- Isolation
- Poor work-life balance
- Presenteeism
- Overworking
- A greater focus on family life
- A desire for more flexibility

Priorities are shifting, and employees struggle with the changes. How has your company supported your people through it all?

It goes deeper than providing laptops and allowing people to work whenever they want. If you're in an office, it is more than just providing snacks. Employers can support employees with their mental health and wellbeing.

Without mental fitness, employees won't be able to do their job well - even if they have every other engagement tool in the world available to them.

Mental health is like our physical health. If you are in pain all the time, how hard is it to get your work done? How motivated are you to connect with others and your work?

Culture is Key

Mental fitness is a journey; it doesn't happen quickly.

That's why it is essential to provide resources employees will use in the long haul to help them with their mental health—things like meditation, yoga, life coaching, and therapy.

But, the wellness benefits and tools are just a part of it. Your company's culture needs to adapt as well.

Your company can become a community where people feel supported and cared for.

The [company culture](#) ultimately reduces stigma and empowers employees to use those wellness benefits without fear of retribution. If you have the wellness benefits but not the culture shift, employee engagement will not increase.

HR leaders have an excellent opportunity to [influence leaders at the top](#) to prioritize mental health. When leaders are open about their mental health experiences, employees take notice. They will feel safer and less "weird" for thinking or feeling how they do. When employees are no longer

fearful of showing that side of themselves, they will start to connect more deeply to others and the organization as a whole.

You, an HR leader, can be the center of the mental health community. You can own it, lead it, and nurture it. You can [train managers on supporting mental health](#) and bring in the tools employees need to take care of themselves.

By prioritizing mental health at the top, educating employees (and yourselves) about mental health, and providing wellness benefits, culture and community will grow organically.

Here is the formula:

Culture + Community + Support = Less Stress and Higher Employee Engagement

Making It All Come Together

Here are some things you can do as a team to deepen your community ties, improve your company culture, and boost wellbeing (while increasing employee engagement in the process!).

1. Work-sponsored Events

Group yoga, team meditation, a steps competition, a cooking contest, a book club, you name it! Bring together a small group at your company to organize and lead these initiatives. At Nivati, we call it our Culture Club.

The idea is to normalize self-care and open the door to those mental health conversations. These activities are also a great way to improve morale - helping to increase employee engagement as well.

2. Company Wellness Programs

You have some options when it comes to [wellness benefits](#). The best wellness programs allow employees to care for their mental health anytime proactively. Quick access to mental health care is crucial.

There are countless wellness benefits and tools out there. Some of our favorites are:

- Meditation
- Exercise
- Therapy
- Yoga
- Nutrition
- Massage
- Financial coaching
- Life coaching

These tools are [proven ways to support employee wellbeing](#). They help people reduce their stress and proactively prevent stress down the road.



Once you have a program in place, work to [increase EAP utilization](#) by promoting it internally. You can even tie in the wellness program with a company event. For instance, have a contest to see who can watch the most proactive care videos in a month. Then, talk about how these tools helped manage stress and mental health.

3. Forums and Mental Health Conversations

In-person and Zoom forums are a space where employees can openly share their struggles without fear of penalty.

This one can be a challenge to jump right into if your company is just starting to address mental health at work.

Your forum can start with your CEO or other company leader talking about their mental health journey and what has helped them cope. You could also bring in a therapist to speak to your team and facilitate the conversation.

We have found that employees will generally feel more comfortable if their managers have a separate forum.

You can also have a Slack channel or group chat where employees can share what has been helping them with their mental health. Designate a moderator that will pop in and ask questions like “How are you managing your stress this week?” or “Share what you’re doing for self-care today.” This person can also direct people to mental health resources if someone is struggling, like your company’s wellness program or a hotline.

You can also encourage managers to discuss mental health in their [one-on-one meetings](#).

The idea is to get people [talking about mental health](#). That is the first step to healing.

4. Designated Mental Health Ambassadors

Select a couple of people to be your main mental health cheerleaders. These ambassadors can be a resource and friend for people that may be struggling.

These people can lead your mental health forums and assist in company event efforts as well. Encourage them to share their stories!

Ideally, your CEO is the ultimate mental health ambassador at your organization. When company leaders fight the mental health stigma, the rest of the company will follow.

For more expert insights on how to support mental health at work, increase employee engagement, and improve company culture, check out our archived HR.com webcast on [How Employers Can Break Down Stigmas Around Employee Mental Health](#).

...



Haeli Harris, LMFT, is the Lead Counselor at Nivati. She has been practicing as a Marriage and Family Therapist since 2014. Haeli has experience working as a Therapist in private practice settings, residential facilities, outpatient treatment care, schools, and telehealth.



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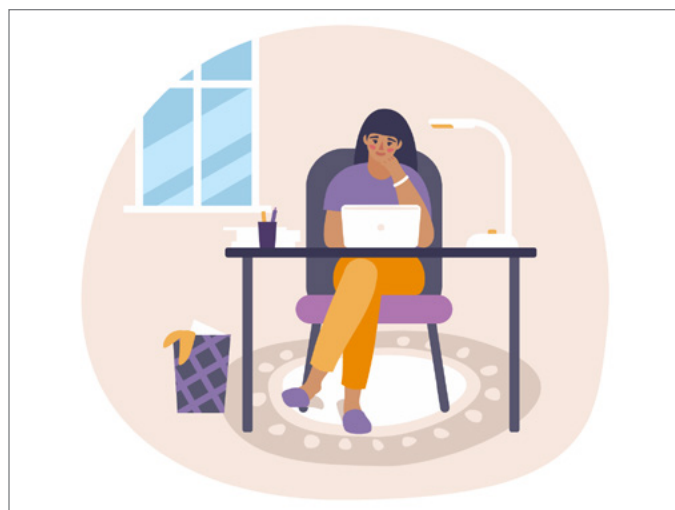
10 Easy Ways To Keep Remote Workers Happy And Engaged

 Bonusly



Once dismissed as a modern perk designed to attract talent, remote working arrangements are now the new normal. A thoughtful [remote work program](#) can keep employees motivated and engaged while producing significant cost savings. Remote work is a win-win, both for employees and the organizations.

According to a [Global Workplace Analytics study](#), a typical business saves about \$11,000 per person, per year, by leveraging remote work policies. Plus, if those with compatible jobs work from home just half the time, there would be a national savings of \$700 billion per year.



Happy, but Losing Steam

While the lure of working from home is exciting for many workers, its novelty can wear off over time. Still, employees who work from home continue to report enjoying their jobs more than those in their cubicles.

In a survey of close to 3,500 employees, [Leadership IQ](#) found that 38% of mobile workers loved their job, 24% of office workers loved their job, and 45% of remote workers loved their job. The quiz also revealed that remote workers tend to show more ambition: expending discretionary effort and striving to be the best at their work.

The survey also uncovered that remote workers need to be self-motivated—more so than office workers. Though remote workers are often happy and productive, they need to drum up [inspiration and motivation](#) to achieve their full potential.

Motivation and Engagement

Keeping remote workers engaged and motivated doesn't have to be complicated. Here are ten simple methods to motivate and [engage your remote employees](#).

1. Provide a Platform for Effective Communication

As with all things in business and relationships, communication is key. Keeping remote employees informed reminds them that the organization has a vested interest in their relationship.

“When I was a remote employee, my boss thought that if he didn’t hear from me and there were no complaints from customers, that I must be doing fine,” says Carol Hughes, former Vice President of Professional Services at Mactive. “The thought was that no news was good news, but that isn’t always the case for remote workers. I knew there had to be a better way to keep remote employees engaged.”

As a VP, Hughes created a virtual lunch where she would get all remote employees on a conference call once a week to have lunch together. They would spend the first 15 minutes discussing business and then would chat about personal things or anything else while eating.

This had a tremendous impact on providing inclusion for remote workers.

2. Keep Them Happy

Remote workers are often happier than other employees. HR professionals know that a [happy employee](#) is more likely to be engaged in their work! Keeping remote employees happy isn’t overly complicated—ask them what they may need and make sure they feel included. Sometimes, it’s as simple as some additional training, upgraded hardware, or a change in routine to help them perform better.

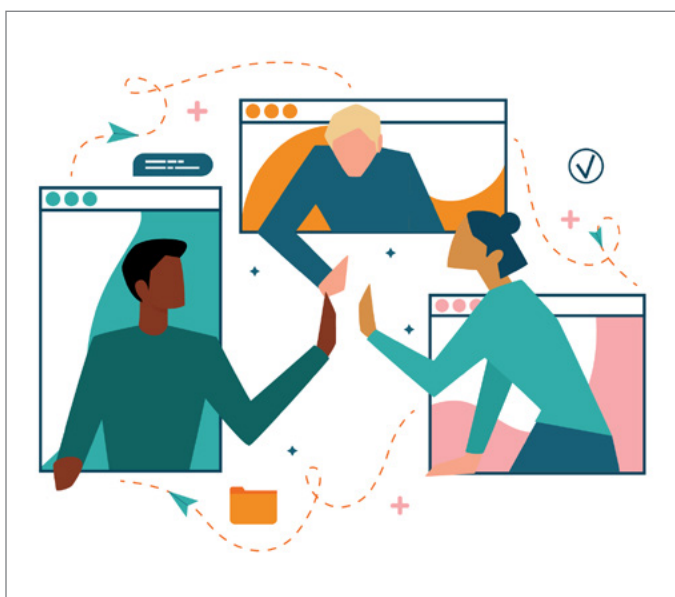
3. Recognize Great Work

Although remote workers have proven that their productivity rivals or exceeds that of their office-dwelling counterparts, they don’t always receive recognition for that work. Make it a point to [recognize remote workers](#) for the many contributions they’re making to your organization.

But don’t stop there! Make recognition highly visible so other teammates are aware of the valuable contributions remote workers are making daily. [Modern communication and collaboration tools](#) make accomplishing this dead simple. Call out remote workers’ big wins, and empower the rest of the team to do the same.

4. Clarify Goals

Remote employees may be at home producing, but are they meeting expectations? Remote workers, just like any other employees, need clear expectations in terms of objectives and company goals.



As [Victor Lipman points out](#), “If expectations are completely clear, and preferably mutually agreed-upon, it helps to bring the entire remote working arrangement into clearer focus.” Setting expectations is a motivator for remote workers.

5. Emphasize What’s Produced, Rather than When

Since the remote worker’s position exists for a reason, let those employees use it to their most productive advantage.

In other words, if one remote worker performs better in the evening and the position doesn’t call for interaction with clients, allow them to produce during that time. Others may be early risers and desire to pump out a project before noon—great! Let them perform without unnecessary restrictions.

6. Keep Coordination of Job Functions in the Forefront

Employees working in the company office generally know and understand workflow processes and why they are necessary.

Remote workers don’t have the same constant information feed from supervisors coming by their desks or general updates through the cubicle telegraph. Giving remote employees continual access to mission and vision statements, project updates, and company performance records helps the remote worker understand how their role contributes to the company’s overall success, resulting in a more engaged employee.

7. Emphasize Culture

Developing company culture with remote employees can be difficult. A [recent Harvard Business Review article](#) suggests that to nurture culture, you first have to build trust—and one good way to accomplish this is to bring remote team members together frequently. By including remote workers in company meetings and other events regularly, a common thread of culture is more easily shared by all.

8. Assist with Time Management

One of the obstacles reported by remote workers is their ability to manage their time effectively. They have the freedom to take care of household chores, taxi the kids to school, go to a doctor’s appointment, and more, but may struggle with scheduling focused work time into their day.

Providing tools, tips, and training that can help remote workers better manage their time is a great motivator. It shows that management cares, and it gives them resources to help with their path to success. Adopting collaborative project management tools like Wrike, Asana, and Trello can make a big difference.

9. Get to Know Your Remote Employees

Take time to meet with your remote team one-on-one, and learn about what is going on in their lives. If the same employee were in the office, people would notice their moods, get wind of their situation, and be able to offer words of encouragement or congratulations, whichever is appropriate.

Are you worried your top employees aren't happy?

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If remote work has your team feeling disconnected, your employees are battling burnout, or those employee engagement scores are looking a little low, we can help.

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- Make fun, meaningful employee engagement second nature.
- Help hybrid and remote employees feel more connected.
- Inspire collaboration between teams.

Remote employees don't enjoy the same kind of working conditions, and as such, efforts must be made to spend time getting to know them.

10. Cut out the fluff

One of the drawbacks of [working remotely](#) is that communication levels with the office have the potential to drop off. As mentioned, a good flow of communication needs to be established with the remote workers to keep them engaged and motivated.

However, there is such thing as too much face time. If a meeting is not necessary, don't schedule one just because it was agreed to address a specific project every day at 8:30 am.

Communicate when necessary, then leave the remote employee alone to do their job.

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Chick Flicks And Employee Engagement

 **Carly MacLennan** and **Bobby Low**, Motivosity



Let's think about what has happened in the last 20 years. We went from discmans to iPods to iPhones. Google is now Google. YouTube was born and bred. The Twilight series were written *and* made into movies. We have self-driving cars! Doctors can now replace a human heart with an artificial heart and can grow organs with stem cells. Wow!

You know what hasn't changed in 20 years? The percentage of engaged employees. 20 years ago, a mere 30% of employees were engaged. And today... despite self-driving cars and the iPhone 3000, still only 30% of employees are engaged. Where did we go wrong? Why have we let this happen? If your heart doesn't hurt for the other 70% of people who are disengaged and actually don't like their jobs... then your wallet will. So what do employee engagement and chick flicks have in common? Not a lot, but I bet I grabbed your attention!

The Cost With Productivity and Turnover

Not only have company's missed out on years of potential creativity, breakthroughs and liveliness of employees, company's have also missed out BIG on their ROI in the areas of productivity and turnover. Keep reading to see how much more money you could make with just a little bit of an investment into employee engagement.

If you aren't engaged in your work, then you are not contributing your full potential. Did you know that an employee is said to create 3x their salary in revenue contribution? Did you also know that most people are only using 74% of their potential?

When Harry Met Sally

Say Harry makes \$60,000/year. With salary and his revenue contributions, that's \$240,000. Harry is a fun person, but he feels forgotten at the company. He doesn't have friends at work, he is isolated in his corner cubicle and his manager can hardly remember his name. Harry shows up at 9 am on the dot and leaves at 5 pm on the dot. Needless to say, Harry is not part of the 30% of engaged employees in America.



Why does this matter? Again, if your heart doesn't hurt for Harry... then your wallet will. Because Harry isn't engaged, you are only getting 74% of what he is capable of. You are leaving over \$62,000 of your investment in Harry on the table.

A small investment into employee engagement could increase productivity by 21%.

Two Weeks' Notice

Sally is a friend of Harry's and works at a company down the street. Sally has been working here for 8 months. She feels like she is putting out some good work but has never once been thanked for it. She still only knows 5 people's names and her manager doesn't know a thing about her.

Sally really wanted to make it to a year at the company, but if the company doesn't make her feel like they need her, then why does she need the company?

To no one's surprise except for her oblivious managers, Sally turns in her two weeks' notice. Turnover costs the company 100% of a person's salary. With Sally's salary of \$60,000/year... you just lost more than you made.

Sally was 1 of 5 people that left the company that month. And just like that... \$300,000 walks out the door.

We know those are a lot of numbers to crunch in the Notebook, but the return on investment that you are missing out on while not investing in employee engagement is too much for us to bear. We've said it once, and we'll say it again... a [little investment](#) can go a long way.

It's "About Time" You Invest in Employee Engagement

What if there was a way that Sally could meet other people at the company? Just because she doesn't have a best friend on her team doesn't mean she couldn't throughout the whole company. What if Harry's manager took the time to get to know him, and coach him through some of his projects. What if Sally heard the long awaited words "thank you - you did great work here" on the last project she turned in?

So, how do you engage your employees? Don't think we'd leave you to try to find out at your best friend's wedding--although we hear there'll be quite the chase.

Check out this blog post: [Employee Engagement-4 Crucial Employee Engagement Strategies](#) and start getting the full return on your investment with your people!

...



Dr. Bobby Low is the People Science, Product Analysis, Strategy & Management at Motivosity.



Carly MacLennan is a Marketing Manager at Motivosity.



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Dec. 18, 2020



“It’s like I don’t matter...”

1.0 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Pros

Casual dress, can wear flip flops. They have cool company swag. Nice ping pong table.

Cons

I don't think most managers understand how far a "thank you" can go. It got even worse when we started working remote.

I mean sure, how could I possibly complain about oatmeal packets in the lunchroom? The projects never stop coming, no one ever even says "nice job", and it ends up that free oatmeal doesn't compensate... not even the apple cinnamon kind.

Clearly not a Motivosity customer.

Word travels fast about your company culture. Empower your team with Motivosity and watch the power of public praise work its magic on morale. We are the modern employee engagement platform for the modern workforce.

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The Future Of Employee Engagement In 2022



 **Kelsey Rogers**, Terryberry

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many employers faced obstacles with employee engagement as well as employee satisfaction. Ideas, solutions, and creative hacks circled the interest as everyone tried to maintain engagement virtually. What employers didn't know was how their office culture and employee engagement would be impacted—the office world changed indefinitely. But what is the future of employee engagement?

Many employers had to decide if they were going to bring people back into the office full-time, continue to work remotely, or develop a hybrid schedule that provides for a mix of in-office and remote work. Terryberry [surveyed HR leaders](#) in November of 2020 as a way to gain insight about how employee recognition was being effected while working remotely. We learned that over a third (35%) of those HR professionals agree that the biggest challenge with recognizing remote workers is administrative logistics and program limitations.

Terryberry views these limitations as opportunities to strengthen office environments, engagement, and employee satisfaction with solutions that employees will truly enjoy, and it begins with excellent recognition. Did you know that organizations that have strong recognition programs and engaging environments can bring

significant improvements to the business such as increased performance and productivity?

Despite your position, whether it's C-suite executives or front-line blue-collar employees, everyone appreciates being recognized for their hard work, loyalty, and dedication. With flourishing employee engagement, companies can see how a fun and collaborative culture can increase overall employee satisfaction while mitigating productivity barriers and miscommunication faux pas.

Whether you have an entire remote workforce, hybrid schedules or in-office employees, [social recognition programs](#) can help organizations build a connected culture where all employees can maintain healthy and productive workplace relationships. One of the best ways to accomplish team engagement is through a social recognition program like Terryberry's [Give a WOW](#) platform.



In this type of program, everyone in the organization can give and receive recognition when they see good work being done. Recognition moments are posted on a shared feed where coworkers can applaud and comment, allowing employees to interact with each other throughout the work week. Consistent and visible recognition builds a sense of connection among teams. Although some employees may be physically disconnected, they can stay connected with each other through work accomplishments and expressions of support for personal occasions like birthdays and other big life moments.

For example, one of Terryberry's clients—Tidelands Health—implemented Terryberry's 360 Recognition Platform throughout the health system to provide employees with an engaging recognition experience. Tidelands Health implemented four modules of the 360 Recognition Platform: [Service Awards](#), [AwardPoints](#), [Award Your Team](#) (manager-driven recognition) and [Give a WOW](#) (social recognition). By implementing and using these tools, Tidelands Health was able to consolidate many of its recognition initiatives into one single platform. They were able to eliminate administrative logistical issues and see an increase in employee engagement.

Tidelands Health saw an overall engagement increased by nearly 10%, year-after-year. Tidelands Health saw a particularly dramatic increase in engagement levels for evening and night shift staff. In part, this increase is attributed to the notes of appreciation that day shift staff regularly post on the Recognition Wall for their night shift counterparts.

So, how can you better engage your employees in 2022? Easy. Develop and implement strategies that will work best for your employees. Here are some ideas to get you started:

Employee Engagement Strategies for Your Team

Implement An Employee Recognition Program

Doesn't everyone like to be recognized for their accomplishments and hard work? We believe that employees will feel more valued if their organizations are more vocal about their appreciation for their employees' efforts. Ensuring employees feel valued is close to our hearts. In fact, recognition is our bread and butter! The easiest strategy for employee engagement is to implement an [employee recognition program](#) to keep your teams engaged. Whether it's by giving employees shout-outs during Zoom meetings or mentioning their accomplishments in a company newsletter, your employee recognition process is key to making your team feel valued and engaged.

Connect with Your Teams

It's an easy strategy—just talk to your employees. Remote or not, it's imperative to connect with your team. So, make sure that you check in on your employees regularly to see how they are doing (professionally and personally). This could be a one-on-one meeting, a team lunch, or even just a quick email. Don't be afraid to share some of your own thoughts too, open communication often creates opportunities to support one another. Always remind them that requesting and receiving support is a sign of strength, as it reflects their trust in themselves and you. You'll find it's one of the simplest ways to engage with employees!

Take Advantage of Technology

Technology will never replace genuine connections, but it can provide an avenue to improve those connections! Software infrastructure is your best bet for enabling those connections among employees working in the office or remotely. Tech tools should be used to accompany your engagement strategies. But technology shouldn't replace human connection. Utilizing tools like Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and Slack can be very helpful in making sure employee engagement and connection are prioritized. Not only do we use similar tools, but Terryberry also uses the Red e App to help build better connections with our awesome manufacturing employees. So, are you ready for the future of employee engagement?

Exceptional employee engagement strategies will ensure that your employees are productive and perform better than ever. If you can cultivate a workplace culture that allows your employees to

flourish and stay connected to their work, you see that happy employees make the best employees. Take your time to invest in engagement strategies such as employee recognition programs. You'll see the ROI sooner rather than later.

Interested in learning how employee recognition and engagement can impact your business? [Contact us](#) today to get started!

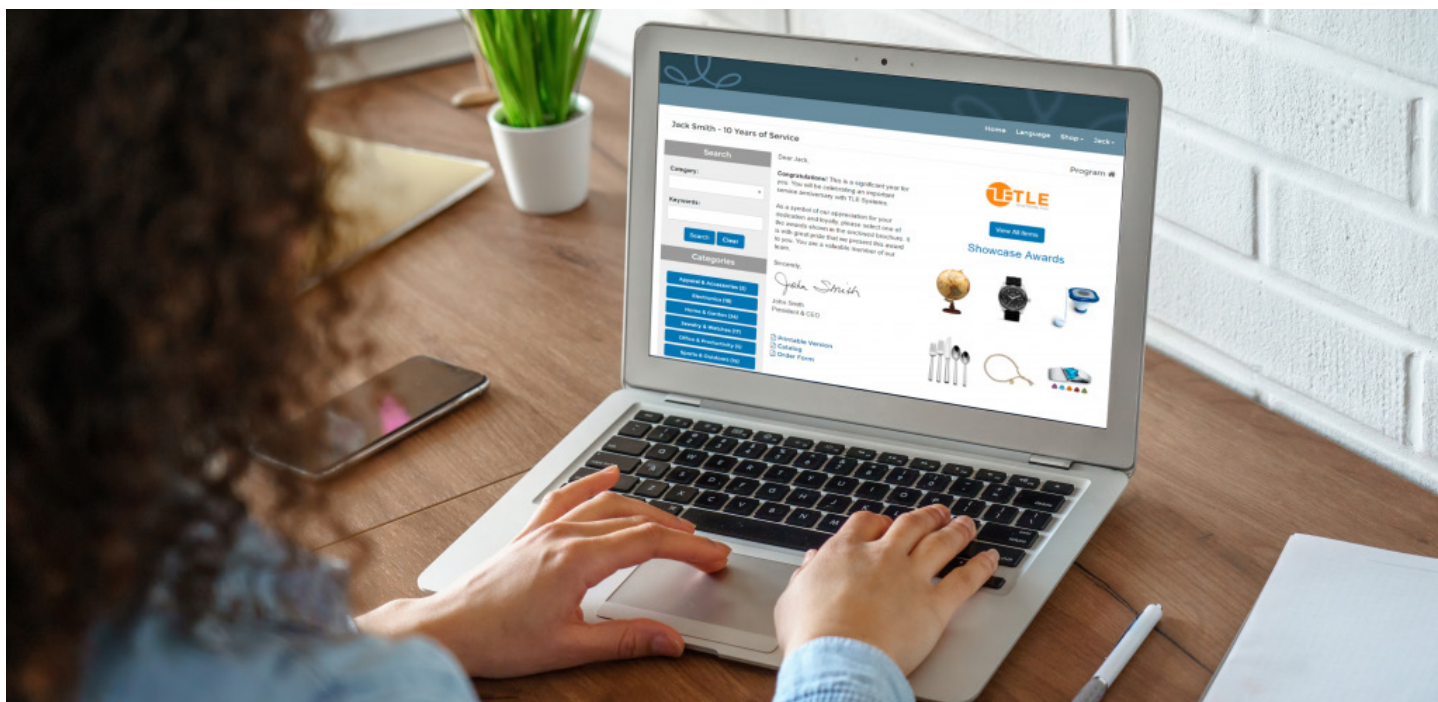
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Kelsey Rogers is the Marketing Manager at Terryberry and helps lead [Recognition University](#) – Terryberry's educational seminars, webinars, and events that offer best practices and techniques for employee recognition, engagement, and wellness.



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Be recognized.
Be engaged.

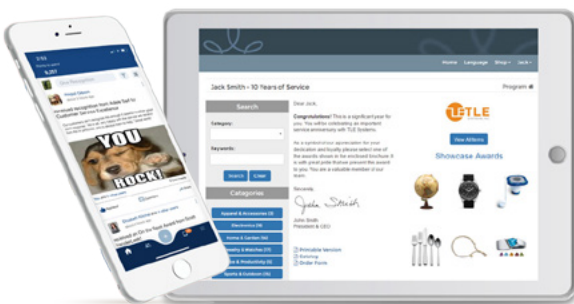


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is one hub with everything you need to build an effective employee recognition program in your organization.

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Are You Overpaying For Employee Training?



Curb rogue spending around your L&D program, while achieving organizational alignment and addressing your team's needs

OpenSesame

For many leaders and training professionals, building and launching a successful learning and development strategy is an arduous journey, filled with essential elements and components that demand consideration during the purchasing and planning process. Will my learners engage in the content? Will my program solve the challenges my team is facing? Will I see a return on my investment?

There are many ways you can measure the effectiveness of your program, but how do you know if you're overpaying for it? To help answer that question, let's examine the biggest antagonist to ROI and a damaging, but sometimes, silent adversary to L&D success: rogue spending, and what areas are affected by it and steps that can be taken to avoid or fix it.

What Is Rogue Spending? And How Does It Happen?

Rogue spending, also referred to as "maverick or tail end spending," refers to the unexpected

and unpredictable spending that can happen outside of negotiated contracts. With learning and development having such a direct correlation and impact on business success, and with eLearning becoming an essential method to drive L&D programs, there are many ways you or your company can easily become rogue spenders.

The popularity of eLearning reached an all-time high this past year, increasing the accessibility to eLearning content while presenting many opportunities to find the right provider and many opportunities to become a rogue spender. One of the main reasons L&D professionals fall into this trap is the lack of time they have to research the value of what some publishers are providing, and how the materials will meet the needs of their team. In many cases, leaders are stuck in the present, focused on immediate needs and trying to find a quick remedy, rather than searching for a solution that can be used to meet both the current and future needs of the organization.

Perhaps the most common reason for rogue spending is lack of communication and coordination between teams. With HR, I.T., and other essential departments scrambling and searching through the many choices to find training that they believe are specifically related to their different focus areas, it's easy for a company to purchase multiple learning solutions, including different LMS', to cover them. The training areas that are typically the root of this problem are usually ones that are used across multiple departments and are intended for a broader audience like business skill development or leadership training.

The Consequences of Rogue Spending

Companies taking the time and effort to invest in training their greatest asset (their workforce) should be cause for celebration, but no matter how positive the intention might be, taking an unfocused approach could have damaging effects with immediate impact to the learning and development budget. When departments spend various amounts on different providers and systems, it's difficult to measure the quality of each training.

And if the training is in a broad topical area, like sexual harassment prevention, for example, the organization may end up becoming misaligned due to the differences in what is being taught, and how it is being taught. This could not only increase the likelihood that an organization's compliance would be at risk, but will almost certainly have a direct, negative impact on the learners themselves, restricting both their growth and the growth of the organization.

Three Steps to Prevent Rogue Spending

So, how can you prevent rogue spending? The experts at McKinsey cite one comprehensive way of solving this problem by recommending that L&D leaders take on a broader role within their organization and establish their vision around a holistic, coordinated L&D strategy that engages the organization and encourages collaboration.

But in order to solve the problem, you have to first know where the problem is occurring in the first place. Conduct an audit and uncover what training programs each department is using and for what purposes. If there are similarities in the topical areas, you can choose one based on cost-value or user feedback.

Speaking of feedback, perhaps the most effective tool is having regular, informative communication between your teams and stakeholders. Building awareness and understanding around each team's needs, both present and in the future, can help create a strategic approach behind the learning and development program.

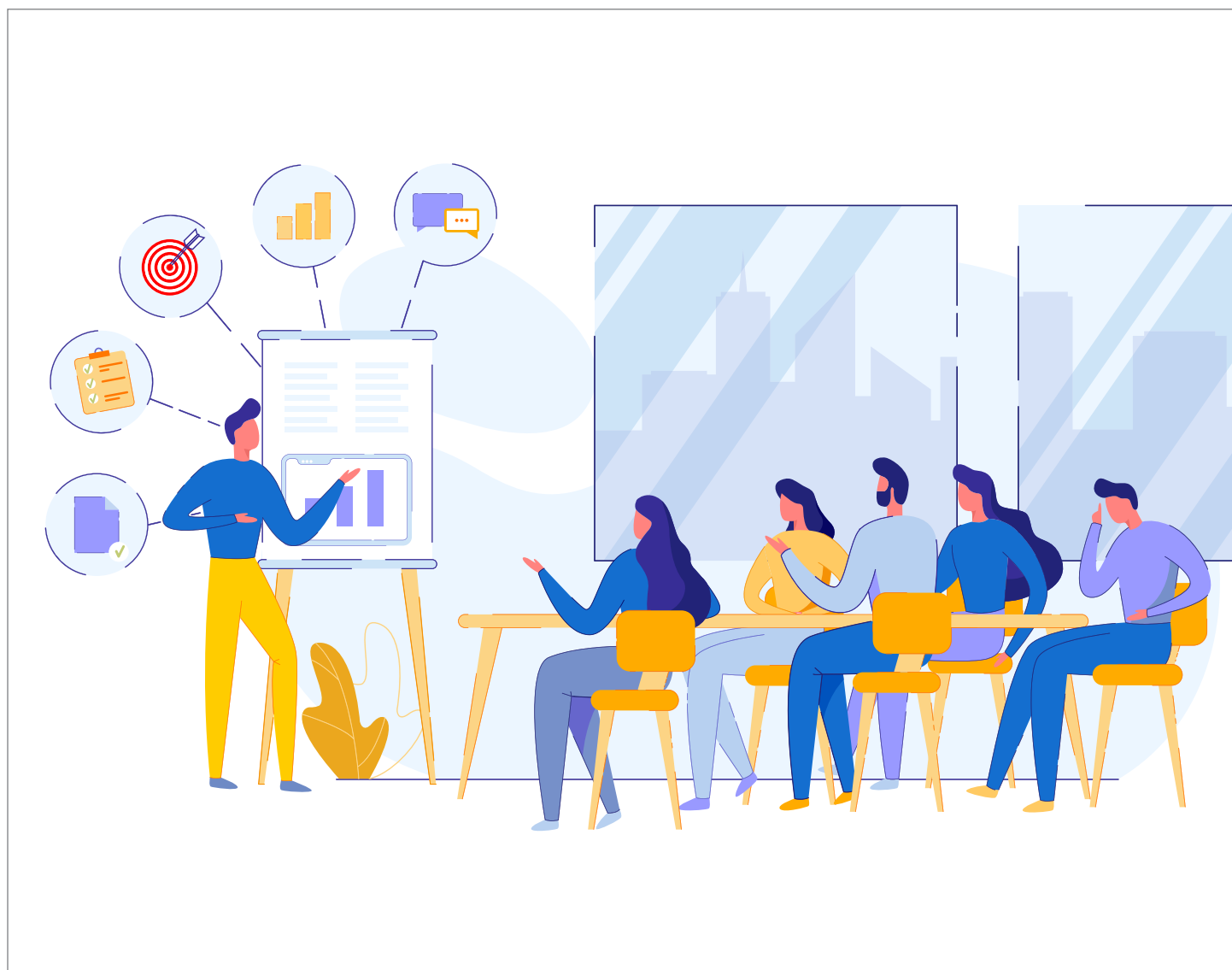
With this knowledge, you can work with your procurement team and leaders to evaluate training technology and content and see if what you currently have matches everyone's needs. After following these steps, you'll be positioned to formulate a learning and development strategy that will drive meaningful conversations, build engagement, keep everyone safe and compliant, and above all, keep your budget spending manageable.

What's Next?

So, what steps can you immediately take to get started? OpenSesame's learning experts are ready to do the work for you by providing a no-cost assessment. Our team speaks with learning managers from different departments on a daily basis, partnering with them to identify where duplicate purchasing is happening, while sharing our customer's best practices on where our all-encompassing, singular catalog of eLearning content can help.

OpenSesame is ready to do all of the coordinating for you, bringing in all relevant stakeholders, including your procurement team, to evaluate your needs and provide you with a strategic solution that is designed for employees in specific roles, departments, locations, and industries. Above all, OpenSesame works to make sure that our customers are maximizing their budget, mitigating rogue spending, and obtaining ROI by getting everything they need from one source.

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Helping Improve Employee Engagement

One Course at a Time

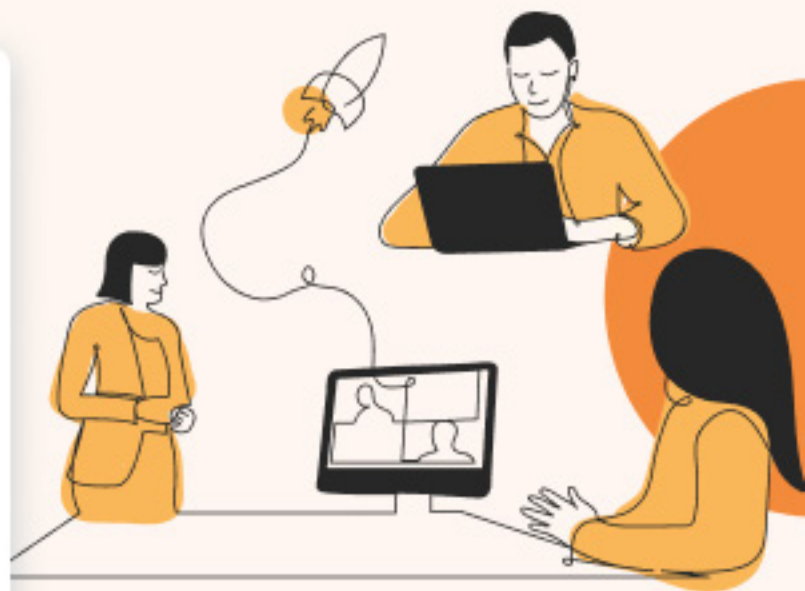
Unified
Technical
Functionality

Equitable
Access

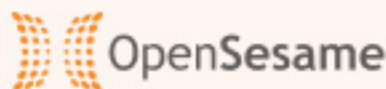
Personalization

OUTCOMES OF A SUCCESSFUL L&D STRATEGY

- **Increase** retention and engagement
- Decrease skill gaps to **increase productivity**
- **Provide** career paths at all levels
- **Eradicate** rogue spending
- **Improve** safety and compliance



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Combating The Great Resignation And Addressing America's Mental Health Crisis

Creating a culture of awareness and acceptance is crucial

 By **Connor Patros**, Mindyra

For more than a year and a half, American workers have lived in the throes of a pandemic that has upset almost every aspect of their lives. Yet a second, quieter crisis has been brewing for many years, impacting worker productivity, availability and general wellness: the mental health crisis. It was here before Covid and it's only compounded by that current, overarching crisis.

Perhaps you've heard of the Great Resignation, the phenomenon of millions of Americans saying, "I quit," and leaving their jobs. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, a whopping 4 million people quit their jobs in April alone. If you're a human resource professional or an executive tasked with attracting and retaining good people, this trend should scare you alive. But there

is hope: it doesn't have to be this way.

Employers that recognize and prioritize employee mental health and implement robust health and wellness programs as part of their health benefits are setting up their workforce not just for improved long-term stability and productivity, but improved workforce wellness too, not to mention general, overall health. The future of employee engagement will be based on identifying and helping to address these mental health struggles.

We know the pandemic has increased mental health difficulties for millions across the country. Research indicates more than 60% of employees report increased stress relative to pre-pandemic levels. More

than 40% of employees report significant sleep problems and about the same percentage of U.S. adults reported struggling with mental health or substance abuse, according to CDC data from June 2020.

While prior generations of U.S. employees are less likely to prioritize their mental health, younger generations are far more likely to, and they expect their employers to provide resources to help them. The research is striking: about two-thirds of Gen Z'ers cite mental health as a priority, while only a third of Baby Boomers do. According to a McKinsey study from earlier this year, more than half of Gen Z employees say they consider mental health benefits when selecting a new employer or staying with an existing one.



We're also seeing a growing disconnect between how employers *think* they are doing when it comes to mental health resources and what their employees think. Almost three-quarters of employers believe they support employee mental health well, yet only 27% of employees agree.

My own analysis has found disengagement is high and productivity is low among younger workers, who do not feel their mental health is being supported at work. I've spent a lot of my professional life thinking about how to provide employers with tools to help support employee mental health, knowing that doing so will be crucial to optimizing employee engagement,

but also to help people live more productive and happier lives.

The first thing employers should be doing is working with mental health experts who can help employees identify what issues they are actually facing, rather than tunneling them into the one or two specific areas that the mental health profession is generally focused on (namely: depression and anxiety). Depression and anxiety are not the only mental health problems that people face, which have become increasingly apparent in the wake of Covid.

The second important thing employers should be doing is providing employees with navigation to trusted tools that

address the problems identified. About 90% of people struggling with health problems will Google their symptoms prior to seeking some sort of care. The issue with that is, if you Google something like "treatment for depression" you could get literally billions of search results. That makes it extremely hard to find trusted resources in all the clutter.

Smart employers are partnering with vetted mental health organizations that can pair down that enormous minefield of offerings, while still providing employees with a menu of viable options (apps, therapists, etc.). Helping people navigate the complex landscape of mental health treatment is a critical ingredient in helping people get better.



At Mindyra, we recently partnered with the digital peer-to-peer support company HeyPeers, to provide peer counseling to employees. Peer support has long been found to be a valuable way to address mental health problems that are not at the severity to require a therapist.

While most employee mental health programs focus on the needs of high-severity employees (who often need resources such as a therapist, nurse or clinical counselor), the needs of low-to-moderate severity employees (such as those who could benefit from peer-to-peer support) are often overlooked, although they make up the majority of people with mental health difficulties.

We must remember, the majority of people with mental health

difficulties actually do not need a therapist and are likely to benefit from lower-level, lower-cost, and more accessible intervention approaches.

I recently had a conversation with a friend who is the CEO of a company in the northeast. He mentioned to me that one of the things he is most focused on is attracting and keeping good workers. This led to a conversation about the current “Great Resignation” and the obvious link between burnout, declining employee mental health, and people leaving their jobs.

While he made it clear that creating a culture of awareness and acceptance is crucial, it was also evident that we need to continue helping equip employees with the tools to battle burnout

and improve their overall mental wellbeing. We do not need to “resign” ourselves to the status quo when it comes to employee mental health. The companies that address this now will ultimately set themselves up for long-term success.

• • •



Connor Patros, Ph.D., is the Chief Clinical Officer at Mindyra.

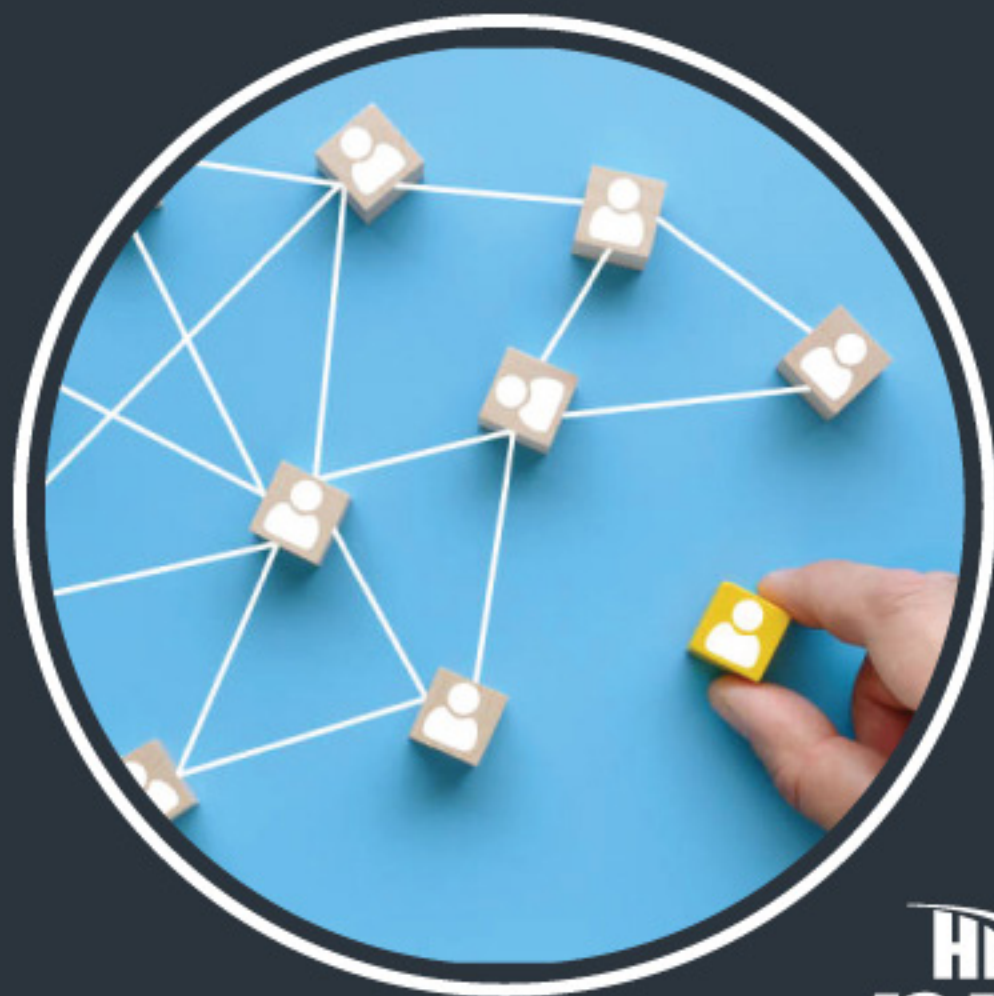


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How Recognition And Feedback Can Motivate And Engage Employees In The Post-Pandemic Era

What will the world of work look like in the future?

 By [Derek Irvine](#), Workhuman

It's a question I'm frequently asked as we emerge from the ordeal of the past 20 months. And while there is no single answer, it's clear that evolving workplace dynamics mean employees will, for the foreseeable future, be spending less time in physical proximity to each other than before Covid-19.

So, what are the implications of this workplace revolution as it relates to employee engagement? In an article, he wrote for the [Workhuman® blog](#), management trainer, speaker, and author [Jason](#)

[Lauritsen](#) noted, "If we weren't expressing enough appreciation to one another when we were in the same physical space together, this won't likely improve when we are physically apart. This is a problem because we know that feeling valued and appreciated are drivers of employee engagement."

Shaping the Future of Work

It's no secret that a culture where employees celebrate, support, and lift each other up leads to greater employee engagement.

And as we now experience what we at Workhuman call the [Great Talent Swap](#), it also has profound implications for retention rates which, as we know, correlate closely with engagement. In a recent [survey](#) of more than 3,500 workers in the U.S., U.K., Ireland, and Canada, nearly 4 in 10 (38%) said they plan to look for a new job in the next 12 months.

So faced with these challenges, how can organizations maintain – and even boost – employee engagement?

Creating a Culture of Recognition – And Driving Engagement

I believe it's time for companies to redouble and refocus their efforts to bring humanity back into the workplace. By emphasizing the whole human, we make workers more motivated, more productive – and more engaged. And as a way to infuse more humanity into work, companies are looking to progressive, visionary HR technology to further their efforts. Human-focused HR technology helps people realize their full potential by creating a more nurturing, connected, and engaged workplace.

Let's start with a look at [employee recognition – and how human-focused HR solutions can facilitate a culture of gratitude](#). According to findings from a [recent Workhuman international survey report](#), workers recognized in the last month, as opposed to never, are:

- Nearly 2x as likely to be highly engaged (60% vs. 32%)
- Nearly 3x as likely to agree their work has meaning and purpose (53% vs. 18%)
- More than 4x as likely to be happy at work (47% vs. 11%)
- More than 4x as likely to agree their company's leadership team is appreciative of the work they're doing (59% vs. 13%)

It's a simple equation: employee recognition is a catalyst for creating a more human workplace – one in which human connection is celebrated and workers feel more engaged. It's the key to creating an inclusive culture because giving and receiving recognition promotes a greater feeling of belonging and connection. This becomes especially important when employees are working remotely.

Today's modern, progressive recognition technology – such as [Workhuman's Social Recognition@platform](#) – is a game-changer in making a strategic, comprehensive program effective. Why is that so?

Historically, recognition has been tactical in nature – consisting of managers randomly handing out gift cards from a drawer or years-of-service programs that give tenured employees items such as watches or pins. A modern approach to employee recognition leverages technology to amplify recognition and broadcast it throughout your company. It makes it possible for everyone – regardless of level – to participate, thereby amplifying recognition moments across your organization. It also enables more people to participate in a culture of recognition, making your program more effective, and your employees more engaged.

In short, social recognition – facilitated by progressive, modern HR technology – helps bring your

entire organization together as a community, unlocking human potential and motivating people to do the best work of their lives. As we move into the post-pandemic era, with more employees working remotely – that will be a game-changer when it comes to engagement.

Continuous Performance Development and Its Impact on Engagement

The data is sobering. According to a [Workhuman survey report](#), more than half of workers say annual reviews are not indicative of all the work they do, and 55% say such reviews don't improve performance.

But here's some good news: Workers who check in with their manager at least once a week are 5x less likely to be disengaged. And employees who check in with their manager regularly report higher levels of trust, respect, and engagement at work.

Why the difference? In the latter scenario, employees are having ongoing, continuous, two-way conversations with their managers – conversations that unfold in the flow of work. We call this model [continuous performance development](#) – a modern, human-centered approach to promoting, evaluating, and improving employee performance that enables employees to take control of their own development. Whether as a complement or replacement to the annual review, it's a more sustainable way to approach employee development.



Rather than high-stakes, high-stress annual reviews, ongoing check-ins enable employees, managers, and peers to give and receive feedback informally and organically. Instead of delaying feedback for a week or months, employees get welcomed advice and critiques in real-time. Because check-ins occur on a regular cadence, there is more opportunity to build relationships, set goals, and promote continual learning and growth. And that adds up to a more motivated and engaged employee.

In fact, research shows that continuous performance

development demonstrably boosts employee engagement. A [Brandon Hall report](#) found that in organizations where managers are effective at coaching, employee engagement nearly doubled. And employees who strongly agree that they can link their goals to the organization's goals are 3.5x more likely to be engaged according to [Gallup's "State of the American Workplace" report](#).

The research further shows that alignment between the employee and the organization improves overall productivity. Gallup found that employees who have had conversations with their managers

about goals and successes in the last six months are **2.8x more likely to be engaged**. And employees who get [daily feedback](#) from a manager are 3x more likely to be engaged.

HR technology can once again play a vital role in boosting employee engagement – this time by infusing a culture of continuous performance development into your organization. In fact, many world-class organizations define and shape a culture of feedback – and accelerate performance and growth – with a flexible software solution such as Conversations®, part of the Workhuman Cloud®.



Such a solution boosts the effectiveness of an organization's continuous performance development strategy with a host of innovative features that allow more frequent communications and enable employees to get crowdsourced advice about improving their performance. Employees can set and maintain short-term goals that align with the organization's business objectives, and managers can use summary reports to guide performance discussions.

And that, in short, provides a solid foundation for an engaged workforce – now and in the new world of work we are entering.

New Challenges – And Opportunities

Engagement has long been viewed as a key barometer by which HR leaders – and the senior

management to whom they report – gauge the health, vitality, and happiness of employees. It's easy to see why. Engaged employees are more motivated, more productive, and more likely to stay at an organization. In addition, numerous studies have shown that an engaged workforce has a real and measurable impact on an organization's bottom line.

The pandemic has created new challenges – and opportunities – for companies looking to not only maintain but also boost employee engagement. That's why I believe now is the time for HR leaders to spearhead renewed efforts toward creating a vibrant culture of recognition and feedback within their organizations.

And today's progressive, human-focused HR technology is ready to help.

Recommended Resources:



How to Know If You Have an Engagement Problem by Sarah Bloznalis



What Employee Engagement Looks Like in 2021 by John Rossheim



Employee Engagement Essentials Post-COVID by Jason Lauritsen



Ignite Employee Engagement: A New Framework for Bringing Out the Best in Your People by Aaron Kinne



6 Tips to Increase Employee Engagement in Times of Change by Workhuman



Derek Irvine is the SVP Client Strategy and Consulting at Workhuman. He helps clients – including some of the world's most admired companies – leverage proven recognition strategies and best practices to elevate employee engagement, increase retention, and improve bottom-line results. As a renowned speaker and co-author of three books – *"Making Work Human," "Winning with a Culture of Recognition"* and *"The Power of Thanks"* - he teaches HR leaders how to use recognition to proactively manage company culture.



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“HR Leaders Need To Establish A Workplace That Rebuilds Trust”

Part III

Q&A with **Dr. Raman K Attri**,
Performance Scientist, Speed To Proficiency Research



[In the second part of the series, Dr. Raman K Attri](#), a [Performance Scientist](#) and the world's leading authority on the science of speed in professional learning and performance, talked about how the skills landscape is changing, and how companies can adapt their learning strategy to the changing skills scenario, among others.

In the third part, **Dr. Raman** touches upon his personal journey in overcoming disability, and how companies can build an inclusive culture, and more.

Excerpts from the interview:

Q. How did you overcome your adversities? From your personal experience, what changes do people with disabilities have to make for a better chance to be accepted and be successful in the workplace?

Dr. Raman: I can summarize the one thing that helped me overcome this trauma in one word - “WINDOWS.”

When I was 6 months old, I lost my ability to walk due to paralysis caused by the poliovirus. It seemed like an unbreakable wall of helplessness. A large part of my early childhood had gone hoping to break those walls. But there was hardly anything I could do about it.

But, if we have walls, we have windows too. One day, I realized that my immobility had offered me plenty of distraction-free, unobstructed, disturbance-free time. I saw that as my leverage, which others did not have. That leverage helped me to immerse myself in the world of learning. Constrained by immobility, books became my best friends. I could sit and read for many hours non-stop. I read anything and everything I could afford to buy or borrow. Soon, I mastered poetry, palmistry, astronomy, physics, science, and other topics.

In the beginning, it was a sort of race with myself to prove to others that I was faster than them in learning anything. That exact mental shift took me beyond that sense of comparison. Soon I conducted a range of experiments on different ways to learn effectively and quickly.

Long story cut short, eventually, I became an engineering, a learning scientist, a researcher, and a global learning leader. I attained over 100 credentials, wrote 20 books, earned two doctorates, and many more things like that in a short period.

Well, that's how I overcame my adversities. In my motivational talks, that mental shift is what I have been preaching to other people with disabilities.

First, they need to strive for true acceptance and not just make compromises. I realize that true acceptance is very difficult, as it takes a long time and comes slow. Unless they accept it wholeheartedly, there are not many chances to be successful. Once they accept it, they are ready to turn the tables around. That's when they develop a strong self-belief that disability could be their differentiator over others.

Second, they need to think beyond visible disability. More often, the real physical disability does not hold them back that much. More concerning are the perceived limitations, constructed in their minds, underneath the visible disabilities. So they need to identify the actual walls and prepare for fighting with them, breaking them using the right tools.

Third, they need to be very clear about what they want and realistically assess if the visible physical disabilities are even preventing them from going there. Perhaps, if they see it clearly, it could actually propel them on that path. If physical disabilities are not blocking their way, they could find routes to reach there without even breaking the apparent wall. If they look at the broader picture, they will start locating windows of opportunities, leverages, and those x-factors which others may not have. For instance, they may have highly developed mental skills, a sharper sense of observation, or better analytical skills.

With this simple shift, we would find that they probably would be more successful, in general, compared to their peers. And they stand with better chances of being accepted and integrated into the mainstream.

Q. What are the challenges that a company face or a disabled employee experience that deter a company's efforts toward building an inclusive culture? What needs to improve to bring a change on this front?

Dr. Raman: Lately, a lot has been done in several organizations and several companies that are now making great progress by having a separate dedicated role in looking at the inclusion of people with disabilities (PWDs). In my view, inclusion policies have been either glamorized too much (in an attempt to show CSR standing) or made overly rigid (in an effort to show legal and political standing).

If we are to make real progress towards inclusion, first, we have to stop politicizing the word "disabled" by calling it with fancy, substitute, and supposedly feel-good words like differently-abled, specially-abled, or specials. It does not describe any person-with-disability (PWD) realistically, and none of these make them feel good either in any way.

On one side of the fence are the peers and managers who consciously or pressed by policy avoid talking to PWDs in actual dictionary words. When you do that, you make it hard for PWDs to express their struggles in more realistic words. I know it may sound awkward, but if you like to describe people's abilities using representative words, why not their inabilities? Otherwise, the most important conversations in inclusion may not happen ever.

You also have peers or managers on the other side of the fence, who simply want to come across as rational, fair, and politically or legally correct. They tend to treat PWDs equal to others, knowing at heart that they are not really equal when it comes to specific tasks or abilities. While it is correct, per policy, there has to be an additional focus on making sure they really can do the job equally like others.



My two cents would be to keep your heart and policy at the same place.

You might try to hire PWDs against an advertised job role based on his/her suitability because you want to come across as an equal opportunity employer. But a more humane, truly inclusive approach would be to go some extra miles, conduct a thorough assessment

of PWDs in terms of overall capabilities, talent, skills, and other aspects. And then find the correct job role, where they could become star performers faster.

Your approach depends upon the intent of your inclusivity movement. Is it striving for true inclusivity to make a social difference, or is it an attempt to look just to society and system? ■

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The Future Of Employee Engagement: Delivering A “Wow” Experience Is Key

| 4 key steps to follow

 By **Dr. SJ Raj**, Newgen Software

Leadership is unlocking people’s potential to become better – **Bill Bradley**

A [study by Gallup](#) shows that employee engagement is picking up pace. It increased to 39% in January 2021, up from 36% late last year. But what exactly is employee engagement? Is it employee happiness or employee satisfaction? Does a happy or satisfied employee guarantee optimum productivity? And why is it in the limelight right now? Let’s explore.

Decoding Employee Engagement

A happy employee can clock in 9-10 hours every day and be on top of all assigned work, but is he committed to his organization? Employee engagement is essentially an emotional commitment that the employee feels towards his organization and aligns himself and his work with the company’s goals and success. **Engaged employees are an asset for organizations as they identify organizational goals as personal goals and go the extra mile to achieve them.**

Employee engagement has a direct bearing on an organization’s performance. Post-pandemic, it has become a business strategy and a critical element for upping workforce productivity. **Business leaders resonate with this narrative. They recognize that an**

engaged workforce can reap multiple benefits for the organization, including driving innovation, reducing churn, improving productivity, improving customer services, and instilling loyalty.

Employers are taking up employee engagement as a strategic action plan on priority. They need to set in motion the right set of action items to create the right conditions for engaged employees to thrive. And to do this, companies need to stop doing things the way it was done and instead keep pace with evolving employee expectations. For instance, remote work and flexi-hours are not seen as perks anymore but a necessity. **Are organizations ready to take the leap in their work model and focus on employee experience?**

The Future of Employee Engagement: Tactical and Strategic Tips to Delivering “WOW” Experience

To make employee engagement initiatives successful, organizations need to carve a powerful and holistic strategy that addresses all aspects of the employee journey. The company’s actions and organizational values have a direct impact on employee engagement. The more closely knit they are, the more positive impact it will have on employees. Here are some quick tips:



- **Weave positive engagement across the employee journey** – Every engagement that an employee has with the organization is an opportunity to make an impression. Right from attracting talent to hiring, onboarding, developing, and departing, organizations need to draw up engagement plans to keep the workforce vested in the company. Organizations need to continually assess if there is a regular discussion between team members and managers, performance conversations need to be more frequent, talent and skill development discussions need to be more prolific, etc.
- **Become an empathy-driven organization** – Empathetic workplaces are winners in all aspects, be it greater employee morale, stronger collaboration, or exhibiting greater resilience during difficult times. So, it's essential that to

make employees vested in the organizations, they too need to be vested in their employees and their wellbeing. Get to know them at a deeper level, connect with them, find out what they are passionate about, celebrate their personal wins, and be a part of their growth story

- **Draw up policies with a wider scope and a focus on employee wellbeing** – Employee-friendly policies are a must to instill trust in the workforce. They need to believe that there is no difference between what the organization says and does, and this needs to be reflected in policies. Post-pandemic, as the stress level grew, it became important for organizations to focus on employee mental health as well. Going forward, organizations need to incorporate physical and mental wellbeing as a long-term scope in employee engagement strategy



- **Introduce gamification to boost employee morale** – Boosting employee engagement can be tricky. To reverse the trend of increasing unengaged employees in the workplace, gamification is gaining popularity amongst HR leaders. Essentially gamification is the process of utilizing gaming elements such as scoring, badges, levels, and rewards in the workplace to make employees actively engage with their work. Organizations can consider gamifying the learning/training process, onboarding process, enhancing job performance, improving communication, and more
- **Empower and delight employees with the right mix of human touch and digital** – With a hybrid working model coming into play, people champion teams need to come up with innovative ideas to engage with employees. When at the office, it's important to balance work with the right dose of fun, get out of the cubicles more often, start learning clubs to increase participation from employees and more, while ensuring social distancing norms. When working remotely, HR teams need to organize more frequent virtual meetups to remain connected with the workforce

Key Takeaway

Engaged employees can do wonders for organizations. A [Gallup study](#) says engaged employees can result in 23% higher profitability and 10% higher customer loyalty/engagement. Organizations need to start acknowledging the need for better-designed customer engagement programs. And people champions and business leaders have a shared responsibility toward improving employee engagement by designing a holistic employee experience.

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Dr. SJ Raj is the Senior Vice President of HR and Operations at Newgen Software.



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Creating More Natural Human-To-Human Connections In The Workplace

To ask how real-time engagement can evolve your business is crucial for future strategy

By Reggie Yativ, Agora

The last two years proved that digital life *is* “real life” – capable of delivering “real-life” experiences despite the circumstances. In many ways technology perviousness as we were able to continue to deliver “real-life” experiences irrespective of circumstances. But those 24 months also proved there’s still a lot more technical work to be done to make interactivity feel more natural, more real-time – more human.

We have seen an accelerated pace of development of real-time engagement (RTE) use-cases and technologies, which was already underway even before the pandemic. Audiences have come to expect intuitive, smooth interactive experiences, and real-time engagement enables this. Today, developers, creators, entrepreneurs and audiences are able to connect globally through a new advanced set of technological tools. There’s explosive demand for real-time engagement in social, work collaboration, wellness and mental health, entertainment, gaming and so many other solutions and applications.

This is how we’ll be living well into the future, and it will improve the human connection and overall – our quality of life.



We have seen an explosion of work and team/group collaboration use cases, for example, Telemedicine adoption alone grew by more than 1000% in March 2020, and another 4000%+ the following month. Education had to go beyond one-way instruction and adopt two-way communication. VR enables new meta-verses where people can create, collaborate, communicate and educate in engaging and simply fun ways. And real-time engagement supports all of these applications. The “global village” we speak of now behaves like an actual village or a community of people seeking virtual real-time interactions.



We're in an era of explosive innovation: By 2023, \$30 billion in revenue will be generated from products and services that didn't exist before 2020. Real-time engagement is critical in this movement. And, it presents opportunities for far more than tech and established media companies. Real-time engagement creates new ways for creators themselves to become innovators and entrepreneurs.

RTE Has Already Reshaped Social, Gaming and Beyond

Gaming is indeed a major application for real-time engagement because it deepens engagement in the communities – players, replayers and viewers – that grow within and *outside* of the game itself. Yes, as HP Innovation and Technology Manager Barbara Pickering pointed out, the gaming audience itself is massive; gaming is a bigger industry than music and movies combined. But to serve that audience, you need to serve users who share their webcams and those who don't, users who want to share play with parties of various sizes, and the tech requirements of the events that draw the biggest audiences. (Remember the League of Legends Championship

drew as large a digital audience as the Super Bowl in 2019!)

But a cottage industry has sprung up to support and enhance interactivity in social streaming. The applications go beyond observing concerts, sporting events and the like – they involve any variety of one-to-one and group conversations and sharing that mimic our in-person experiences and satisfy the human desire to connect. "Real-time, interactive online experiences are becoming the norm," Pickering said. "A requirement, really, as people are living their lives virtually so much of the time."

RTE Addresses Our Desire for Flexibility

We see that in remote workplace applications that support workflow across time zones, and that allow workers the space to be their most productive and creative. Companies have had to adapt or lose out on hiring the best talent. We see that in wellness tools: People today approach wellness holistically, and want the flexibility and interactivity to pursue their goals through any meaningful aspects of their daily lives.



The opportunities for developers are almost limitless in real-time engagement. But DIY development approaches introduce complexities with infrastructure, scale, QA and time to market – all of which take developers away from their core mission. To stay on task with the core product and make the most of the real-time engagement economy, consider this in a real-time engagement partner:

- Scale. Your real-time engagement partner must be able to manage surges in peak concurrent usage when you host your largest experiences or go viral.
- Make sure your partner can understand and adapt to disparities between devices, as well as last-mile connectivity issues (congested Wi-Fi, reaching the far edge of cellular coverage, etc.). Any real-time session can see a wide range in bandwidth and device capabilities among participants.
- Low latency. Real-time engagement needs to be real-time for *all* participants. There's no room for lags in video, audio or messaging functionality.

- Adaptability to your business's own KPIs.
- Low-code/no-code solutions that lift the burden from developers.

While it's clear that real-time engagement is indeed one of the keys to our future, it's already the present and interactivity has evolved. It's no longer the realm of early adopters; it's the burgeoning mainstream of digital. To ask how real-time engagement can evolve your business is crucial for future strategy. To neglect to ask is to be left behind the curve, and we all know what this means.

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Reggie Yative is the Chief Revenue Officer and COO at [Agora](#).



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Creating The Future-Ready Employee Engagement Initiatives

Employee engagement needs to morph into a new employee-centered way of managing the organization

By  **Michael Zroback**, Michael Zroback & Associates

Although the concept of Employee engagement has been around for quite a while, it is not a tool highly regarded by senior management. One wonders why not? After all, there are scores of studies that describe the various levels of employee engagement in various organizations. However, the whole concept of employee engagement is based on responses to a questionnaire and is not readily connected to organizational performance.

I think that, in the future, it will not be good enough to say that you have increased a company's EE by pointing to an increase in their EE survey scores. Instead, you will need to point to an increase in organizational performance - increases that could come only from an intervention that made such improvements possible!

Such changes could include a variety of improvements, such as:

- decrease in absenteeism & accidents
- improved employee relations (fewer grievances/arbitrations)
- increased quality of new-hires
- improved supervisor-employee relationship
- more work-related training
- implementing career planning

To the casual observer, these changes might seem to be unimportant ones but in actual fact, they do make a significant difference. In fact, *they are the difference that makes a difference!*

If employee engagement is to be taken seriously by senior managers, the results from these changes need to be measured, i.e. costed, and presented to them. Anything else is simply 'smoke and mirrors' resulting in useless effort, wasted money

and disillusionment! But proving to senior management that these results of an employee engagement initiative can save/make considerable sums of money is a very effective way to catch the attention of the organization's decision-makers!

Employee engagement initiatives will need to focus on a 'long-term' strategy rather than simply a 'flavor of the month' approach to improving the productivity of employees. The core of this new way of managing is a concerted effort to improve the relationship between the organization's managers and those who report to them. Why? Because relationships create emotional bonds and emotions are very powerful motivators! And as Randell Beck & Jim Carter stated in Business Journal, April 21, 2015, "... [managers account for at least 70% of the variance in employee engagement scores across business units.](#)"



But how does one improve the relationship between the managers and their direct reports? This requires a shift in the approach to managing employees - one that begins with giving the employees significant insight into their company's mission, vision values. This needs to be followed up by giving the employees insight into the way their department's objectives fit into those of the organization. Understanding these details of their company presented by people with whom they have already had a close relationship will enable them to bond with their organization on several levels and want to work hard to ensure its success.

Next, they need to be empowered to have a fairly significant degree of control over their job, e.g.

what projects to pursue that will contribute to their department's objectives. This employee-management relationship can be cemented by having regular meetings to update each other on progress, to problem-solve, plan further initiatives, discuss future training and possible career moves, etc.

In this way, employee engagement becomes a long-term, deeper process that is very meaningful to its employees. Work becomes more meaningful to employees as their experience of employee engagement deepens. Their view of work changes.

Employees become free to relate to each other in more collaborative ways, to explore new ways of doing things, to

communicate more freely and frankly, to look at issues from a long-term perspective. To sum it up, the newly found freedom will enable employees to think and act in new ways that can only benefit their company.

The bottom line is that, in the future, employee engagement needs to morph into a new employee-centered way of managing the organization rather than a grab-bag of disparate programs or initiatives. In the future, employee engagement initiatives also need to focus on strengthening the long-term approach to building a successful organization. They need to strengthen the long-term approach to building a successful company by focusing on improving performance in many areas rather than simply looking to increase profits in the short term. In this way, a company will be built from the inside out, built to perform, built to last. Isn't that what everyone really wants?

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Michael Zroback is the President of Michael Zroback & Associates.



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The Antidote To The Great Resignation

Six key principles to organizational values and purpose

By [Jim Haudan](#), Root, Inc.



When we started [Root](#) 30-plus years ago, we really didn't know exactly where our adventure would take us. Our future state was a work in progress. The journey took many twists and turns. However, what we did know is what we stood for and why it mattered. We wanted to create an environment – both at Root and with our partner organizations – where every single person felt like they were a part of a team and had the chance to contribute. We were passionate about our

aspiration to awaken the sleeping giant of human talent that existed in most organizations, around the corner and around the world.

Everyone Wants to Feel Valued

From our own experiences, we knew that the most successful companies, organizations, and communities had a culture where every person feels valued. Where every person, no matter what their position, feels they had a chance to make a difference. We saw

first-hand that when you appeal to the highest level of thinking in people, you get the highest-level of response. We believed in the latent and untapped capability of people and saw employees/team members/associates as a potential giant wave of human possibility just waiting to be set free. So much so that early on we cheered when senior leaders were dumbfounded at the untapped intelligence of their people, their amazing curiosity about their business, and the authentic care they had for each other and the success of the organization.

At the core of our beliefs, we felt strongly about the fact that people wanted to do more, be more, commit more, innovate more, contribute more, and be valued for their ideas. We often commented that we wanted to help people get off the bench and into the game of their business-day lives to help them be part of something that was bigger than themselves, and to be part of the team creating exceptional results.



Human Capital Is Invaluable

We've also always had a strong belief in unleashing the dormant human capital in organizations. This is just a fancy way of saying that we believe in making a stand for people who didn't have a voice – or didn't have a voice that was recognized, respected, or sought out.

One of the most memorable experiences in our early days took place at a well-known Fortune 500 company. We saw people engage in robust dialogue about the future of their business and identify actions to create a better business for the customers they served. Root was there to help ensure that everyone understood the impending changes coming

to the business and to make sure that the customer was the main focus and didn't get lost in the shuffle. A leader whispered to us at the back of the room, "Welcome to the church." What she was highlighting was how the spiritual experience that occurs when taking a stand for people who don't have a voice reveals how much they have to offer, and how powerful unleashing that voice could be for the business.

In the face of the recent global health pandemic and the "Great Resignation," which has triggered permanent shifts in how and where people work, now is the right time to reiterate key principles that typically form the foundation for organizational values and purpose.

Six Key Principles to Organizational Values and Purpose

1. To Lead Is to Serve People –

To lead is to serve with the mindset that it is both a privilege and a noble act to truly serve another human being. To serve is to be focused on helping people become more confident, capable and able, and believing in them long before they believe in themselves. Serving begins with listening to people. And listening to people usually leads to the insight that the best way to support another human being is by stepping back so they can step up with confidence. Being selfless is one of the hardest things you will ever do as a leader, and it requires constant, conscious competence.

2. Appeal to People's Highest

Level of Thinking – Treat people with the belief that they are only contributing 50% of their capabilities and that it is your responsibility to appeal to their highest level of thinking to unlock the other 50%. You will never know how good someone is until they stop improving, which means that there are *always* additional capabilities to be unlocked.

3. One Person Can Change the World

– It can be difficult to believe one individual or small group can make a difference. Our minds and our hearts are in the right places, but what can one person do? Turns out, quite a lot. Each person has the power to set an example and inspire others – and that has the potential to affect the outcome of any and every situation. Change has *always* started with one person taking a stand for a better way.

4. Invite People to Co-think

– The greatest respect you can have for another person is to care

about what they think. Dignity and respect for another human being flow from inviting others to co-think, rather than telling or suggesting to them what to think. Being curious about what others think and seeing them as creators of new and better ideas is at the core of valuing the creative abilities of other people.

5. Stand Up for People Who Don't Have a Voice

– There is a quote about human potential that reads something like, “born a man, died a grocer.” It is sad how often people get stereotyped based on what they do and not who they are! People have an amazing array of talents, skills, and capabilities. Leaders who advocate for people to have a voice that reveals all they have to offer create a culture that is constantly finding new ways to honor and value people for the amazing bundle of talents they can offer to any organization that liberates their voice.

6. Value Each Person for Who They Are

– We have little trouble seeing it when a child is born – there is no question about whether they are of value. In fact, we use words like *invaluable*, *priceless*, *precious*, and *irreplaceable*. A culture of dignity and respect is one where someone is valued for who they are.

Together We Are Powerful

I've seen the above principles have the power to help awaken the sleeping giant of human possibility, even in unprecedented times like today. The truth is that as leaders, we are almost entirely ineffective alone. But when we let go of our ego and realize the power of listening and empowering rather than directing and telling, we create something more innovative, more intelligent, and more powerful together than we ever could have created alone.

Where are you? Are you ready to awaken your organization's sleeping giant?

• • •



Jim Haudan, is a different kind of CEO, with a passion that goes beyond leading Root to success. For more than 20 years, he has been helping organizations unleash hidden potential by fully engaging their people to deliver on the strategies of the business. The impact of Root's approach on so many people and organizations over two decades is captured in Jim's national best-selling book, *“The Art of Engagement: Bridging the Gap Between People and Possibilities”* (McGraw-Hill, 2008).



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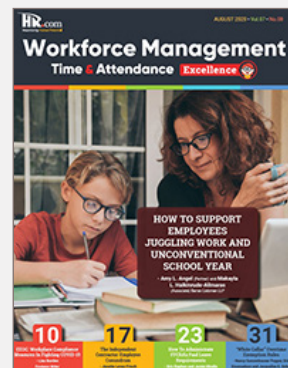
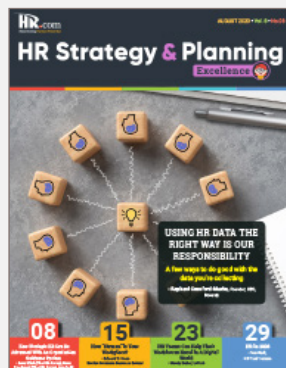
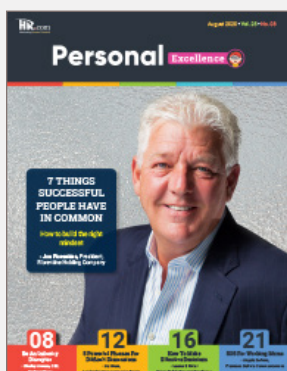
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