



Today more than ever, employees want more than paychecks. They want purpose and meaning from their work. They're seeking relationships with supervisors who can mentor them.

They want to be engaged. Every day.

For employers, this new generation of workers comes with challenges—a lot of challenges. But it also presents an incredible opportunity.<sup>1</sup>

## Engaged employees are motivated contributors.

When employees are engaged, they are active participants in their work. They have a sense of purpose. They don't need you to hold their hands or push them. They make strong efforts to accomplish important tasks in order to reach objectives, pursue their tasks with passion, and they care about their work and about the performance of your organization.

Given the right environment and the opportunity, they believe their efforts can make a difference and will go an extra mile (or two) for the company without being asked.

High engagement can have a great impact on:

- Creativity and innovation
- The quality of products and services
- Your company's image and reputation
- Consumer relationships
- Employees' sense of wellbeing

## Non-engaged employees come with a cost.

Non-engaged workers approach their jobs as jobs. They put in their time with little motivation. Easily recognizable from their counterparts, experts divide them into two types:

- Non-engaged collaborators who contribute to the company but demonstrate little emotional allegiance
- Disengaged collaborators who simply aren't invested, sometimes work against the company and are often absent<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"Building a high development culture through your employee engagement strategy"/Gallup®

<sup>2</sup>"Gallup, 2017/lumapps.com



According to recruiter.com, non-engaged employees can be a real drain on your operation. They tend to monopolize their managers' time, call in sick more often, and have more work-related accidents. Those who aren't completely disengaged kill a lot of time during their day—a real drain on productivity.

Actively disengaged employees can hold grudges toward the company and/or management and act out. These could be company veterans who missed out on promotions or simply feel undervalued. In any case, their presence can be costly.

That cost can be \$483 to \$605 billion per year in productivity.<sup>3</sup>

## To foster greater engagement, you have to be intentional.

Experts agree that, given the importance of engagement, organizations need to have sustained, concrete plans for fostering it. It's not enough to simply think about or discuss the concept of keeping employees engaged. To see the benefits of engagement and use it as a differentiator in the marketplace, you need to:

- Define engagement goals at all levels
- Develop plans to support high engagement
- Implement those plans throughout the organization
- Track the results and adjust plans when needed
- Manage and maintain engagement efforts over the long term<sup>4</sup>

### The benefits of engagement. By the numbers.

Absenteeism: **41%** lower

Turnover: **59%** lower

Employee safety incidents: **70%**  
fewer

Productivity: **17%** higher

Sales: **20%** higher

Profitability: **21%** higher<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Ibid



## Engagement doesn't happen overnight. It requires a persistent, sustained effort.

Engagement efforts are just that: “efforts.” They don't always work. Success or failure depends on your organization, the types of initiatives you implement, the timing of those efforts, and the personalities of the people involved.

After you launch an engagement program, you may find an initial increase in engagement, followed by a plateau or gradual decline. On the other hand, you may think you have high engagement, only to find your business results tell a different story.

You may blame the tool, the form of measurement, the philosophy behind the effort, or some impossible-to-change demographic or cultural factors.

Just don't assume you've reached the limit for your employees' engagement or that employee engagement can't be sustained long term.

Be patient. Be persistent.

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And understand this: Quite often, the apparent failure of employee engagement efforts is due to the way engagement programs are executed.<sup>6</sup>

## Some common errors of implementation.

One of the frequent problems with engagement efforts is that well-meaning supervisors set their own bars too high. They focus on issues outside of their control and end up trying to solve things that don't impact workers' core psychological needs at work. This can happen when employee research uses a low-bar “percent favorable” metric that inflates scores and creates blind spots, resulting in the appearance of high engagement without strong business outcomes.

Problems also can occur with the overuse of pulse surveys. They tend to give immediate feedback but rarely result in direct action.

Perhaps the greatest cause of engagement program failure is that it is often considered a function of HR. If the organization—from the c-suite to the shop floor—doesn't embrace it, it can feel as though you've exhausted your efforts before you've explored its full potential.<sup>7</sup>



<sup>6</sup> “Building a high development culture through your employee engagement strategy”/Gallup®

<sup>7</sup> Ibid



## Remote working doesn't change the need. It just makes it more challenging to meet.

With remote workers, fostering engagement is more critical even as it's more challenging to accomplish. Your employees, whether they're connected by Zoom or in cubicles next to each other, have fundamental needs that must be met to achieve high performance.

Here are some ideas for keeping remote workers engaged:

### Virtual coffee breaks

Ask team members to brew cups of joe (or tea), then get them on a video call that isn't about work. Spend some time just chatting about what they've been doing, about the challenges of working from home—anything.

### In-house team introductions

Hold a video call and ask your on-site workers to introduce themselves. Use a list of pre-determined questions to break the ice.

### Home tours

Ask remote employees to use their smartphones or laptops to give quick video tours of their homes.

### Show-and-tell

Give your off-site personnel a platform to share something interesting about their home or themselves—this could be anything from a gadget to a car, an interesting story, or a hobby.

### One-on-ones with your top management

By scheduling a short face-to-face meeting with an employee every day, it's doable. Such calls aren't just about for feedback; they should give team members time to share concerns and opinions.

### Online training

Introduce or update an online learning management system. In addition to native training material, consider purchasing and providing access to other relevant courses.

### A feedback loop

Make sure you're offering a way for remote workers to provide their feedback on a range of topics, including:

- Opinions about improving existing processes
- Concerns about ongoing projects
- Views about current management
- Thoughts about the company culture

### Multiplayer gaming

Your employee engagement ideas needn't be boring or limited to work. Hold a tournament and/or a regularly scheduled time for offsite workers to play their favorite games against each other. Keep track of who wins. Declare a monthly champion.

**Home office redecoration**

Allocate funds to help pay for remote-worker home office construction or improvements. Encourage off-site workers to create workspaces places in which they feel positive and productive.

**Positive reinforcement**

Make sure that you're regularly recognizing remote employees for all the great work that they do. Consider purchasing HR software that provides a built-in feedback tool.

**Flex schedules**

Employee empowerment and engagement go hand-in-hand. So, give your remote employees the freedom to set their own schedules as long as they're getting their work done on time. This builds a sense of trust and mutual respect.

**Peer-to-peer feedback**

Give opportunities for workers to applaud one another, to make suggestions, and to offer encouragement. By encouraging peer-to-peer feedback, you can ignite conversations among your employees and boost engagement.

**Special perks and benefits**

Develop a package of special benefits for your remote employees. Here are few thought starters:

- Offer free subscriptions for Netflix, HBO, or Disney+
- Provide state-specific healthcare coverage
- Give allowances for groceries
- Allow generous PTO
- Provide access to online fitness training programs<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> "13 Employee Engagement Ideas for Remote Workers"  
<https://www.goco.io/blog/employee-engagement-ideas-for-remote-workers/>

<sup>9</sup> "The value of employee engagement"  
<https://emplify.com/blog/the-value-of-employee-engagement/>

**How to create value, one engaged worker at a time.**

To sustain engagement long term, you need quantitative and qualitative employee feedback. This will give you steps for improvement and guidance on what works and what doesn't. As you get that feedback, keep these key points in mind:

- Just because you've conducted employee surveys in the past, doesn't mean you have an accurate picture of the current state of engagement. Maintain a high level of engagement requires ongoing, comprehensive studies conducted on a regular basis.
- Measuring engagement is only worthwhile if it results in actionable steps. Your research needs to pinpoint issues by department, team, location, and role. Once you have that information, send follow-up questions to determine changes that need to be made and give workers a sense of influence over their own destinies.
- Avoid employee surveys that result in lots of data, but no action plan. Review the data you do gather to determine overarching themes that will help you address problems, proactively engage employees, and prevent future challenges.<sup>9</sup>