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4 Powerful Ways to Fuel Employee Engagement





Let's start with the basics.

1. What is employee engagement?
2. What does an engaged employee look like?
3. What is disengagement?
4. What does a disengaged employee look like?
5. Why is it important?

1. What is employee engagement?

Dr. Meisha-ann Martin, director of people analytics at Workhuman®, explains it as the following: “When we’re talking about engagement, we’re not just talking about satisfaction. We’re talking about people personally connecting to their work and being enthusiastic and energetic around it. Engagement is the outcome of the different aspects of the overall employee experience.”

2. What does an engaged employee look like?

Highly engaged employees are valued and appreciated for their contributions. They feel connected to both the people around them and the organization’s mission.

Telltale signs of an engaged employee include:

- High levels of motivation
- Desire to learn and grow
- Exceeding expectations
- Building connections with co-workers

Now that we know the fundamentals of employee engagement, let’s take a look at the opposite end of the spectrum – disengagement.

3. What is disengagement?

It's like constantly waking up to a low-grade fever. Not feeling your best, but not bad enough to get back in bed. So, you go through the motions of your day, lackluster and exhausted, counting the minutes until you can call it quits for the day.

4. What does a disengaged employee look like?

Low employee engagement can be costly, so it's important to know how to spot it before it's too late.

Some **obvious signs** of low engagement:

- Frequent absences or tardiness
- Missing deadlines
- Making careless mistakes
- A negative attitude

More **subtle signs** include:

- Doing the bare minimum
- Poor communication
- Avoiding team building or colleague interactions
- Not showing interest in learning and development opportunities

5. Why is it important?

It has the potential to make or break an organization. After all, we know engaged employees are good for business. Just how much does an engaged workforce improve a business's bottom line? Here are a few of the numbers according to Gallup.

Organizations with highly engaged employees report:

- 81% less absenteeism
- 43% less turnover
- 23% higher profitability





Turning insights into action

To effectively mitigate and prevent future disengagement, employers must first get to the root of the problem – *how* and *why* employees become disengaged. Here are just a few of the reasons:

1. **Poor onboarding**
2. **Lack of connection or purpose**
3. **Absence of recognition**
4. **Not feeling heard by leaders**

This doesn't happen overnight. Instead, employees experience any – or all – of the examples listed above over the tenure of their career. And if not mitigated, slowly but surely an employee who came into a position with the highest of potential will now be spending their workday waiting for it to be over.

**So how can business leaders actively engage employees?
Here are four ways.**

1. Design effective onboarding.

Onboarding an employee is like making a first impression. It's about putting your best foot forward – previewing the values and culture of the organization to the employee. And like first impressions, onboarding can be critical to an employee's relationship with a company.



Despite organizations being aware of its importance, only 12% of employees strongly agree their company's onboarding was effective.

Yet, when employees do receive great onboarding, 69% of them are likely to stay for at least three years at the company.

The foundation for employee engagement starts on day one. Ensure your onboarding process is far-reaching, transparent, and interesting. Ask highly engaged employees to speak to new employees; make space for questions and comments; and facilitate team building for new hires to bond with each other and the company.

2. Promote connection and purpose.

As humans, we are hardwired to crave connection – something that has become even more important with the rise of remote and hybrid work.

When employees feel connected to their co-workers and the organization's mission, they are more engaged, not to mention more productive and less likely to leave the organization.

Focus on encouraging participation in events – whether in person or remotely. And make sure to include those who may be remote in in-person events and vice versa. Start employee resource groups to help build a sense of camaraderie between workers with similar interests or commonalities.

A Social Recognition® program linked to company values or strategic initiatives can also provide frequent reminders of how day-to-day work is directly connected to company goals, generating a positive feedback loop within the organization.



3. Build recognition and feedback into culture.

The greater the sense of appreciation in an organization, the more engaged workers there are. Workhuman's latest [survey report](#) found people who were thanked in the last month are more than 2x as likely to be highly engaged.



Frequent and meaningful feedback is also key to engagement: Gallup found employees who've had conversations with their managers about goals and progress in the last six months are almost 3x more likely to be engaged.

Engaging your employee base takes effort, but the ROI certainly makes it worth it. Investing in social recognition and continuous performance development platforms is the best way to infuse an organization with gratitude and growth. Praise and feedback in real time – rather than six months later at an annual review – is essential for any organization's engagement and retention strategy.

4. Ensure employees' voices are heard.

Last but certainly not least, engaged employees are ones that feel listened to.

In fact, when employees feel their ideas and suggestions matter, they're more than 2x as likely to report a positive employee experience (83% vs. 34%).

The goal of any company is to grow as fast as possible. Make this process easier by giving up outdated, top-down control models, and instead give more control to the people who know best – the employees doing the work. Giving managers the autonomy to run their team the way they see fit not only builds organizational trust, but also gives employees a sense of ownership over their work.

In the end, the best way to keep employees engaged is by asking them what they need. With a survey tool like Workhuman's Moodtracker[®], you can get to the heart of organizational issues in real time. The survey results provide leaders with new insights into employee productivity and serve as warning signs for low morale and disengagement.



It's important to remember to continue this communication cycle. Ask, listen, respond, and act. Showing employees you care about their workplace experience is not just good for them, but good for the entire business's bottom line. In the new world of work, leaders looking to attract and retain top workers must make employee engagement a number one priority.

Looking to add fuel to your employee engagement strategy? Book a demo to get started today.

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