# zenHR

# Your Guide to Employee Engagement

# What is Employee Engagement?

Employee engagement is the emotional commitment employees feel towards the organization they work for and their actions to ensure its success. Employee engagement is based on trust, integrity, two-way commitment, and open communication between an organization and its employees. It is an approach that increases a business' chance of success, contributing to organizational and individual performance, productivity, and well-being, which can all be measured using the right metrics.

**Engaged Employees** are highly involved in and enthusiastic about their work and workplace. They drive performance and innovation and move the organization forward.

**Disengaged Employees** are psychologically unattached to their work and company. Their engagement needs are not being fully met, and they're putting time but not energy or passion into their work.

**Actively Disengaged Employees** aren't just unhappy at work, but they are also resentful that their needs aren't being met and are acting out their unhappiness. Every day, these workers potentially undermine what their engaged coworkers accomplish.

Engaged employees are dedicated, enthusiastic, and passionate about their work. They feel a sense of emotional connection to their company. They are essential to your organization's success as they drive innovation and help move the business forward. They are characterized as being loyal, committed, productive, and results-driven. Whereas disengaged and actively disengaged employees aren't as proactive and can affect the growth and success of your organization.

**Gallup Research** shows that eliminating active disengagement from the workforce can result in a significant increase in productivity.

With that said, it's crucial to boost your employee engagement to help you attain a productive and engaged workforce.

**Having an engaged workforce also helps you:**

- Improve profitability
- Generate new ideas and innovations
- Reduce turnover
- Increase retention
- Improve productivity
- Boost customer satisfaction
- Make work a happier and healthier place for everyone

# The Difference Between Employee Engagement and Employee Satisfaction

Employee engagement and satisfaction may sound pretty similar but are quite different. Both are essential to the success of your organization; however, they aren't inclusive of one another. As mentioned before, employee engagement occurs when workers are committed to helping their companies achieve all of their goals.



**Engaged employees** are motivated to show up to work every day and do everything within their power to help their companies succeed. While on the other hand, employee satisfaction is the state of a worker enjoying their job but not necessarily being engaged with it. **Satisfied employees** may come into work early or stay late without contributing much or breaking a sweat. While satisfied employees are happy with their jobs, they do not necessarily feel engaged.

Satisfied employees may complete their job responsibilities, but they'll never go above and beyond. This is the key difference between engaged employees and satisfied workers. When employees are engaged, not only are they happy to have their jobs, but they are always thinking about how they and the company can be better. This can lead to streamlining business processes, brainstorming new product or service ideas, or never hesitating to give a coworker a helping hand when it's needed. Organizations should ensure that employees are satisfied with their work, but they should also be concerned with measuring and improving employee engagement.

# Components of Employee Engagement

Two primary factors drive employee engagement and result in a high-performing workforce:

## 1.  Engagement with The Organization

This type of engagement measures how engaged employees are with the organization as a whole, and by extension, how they feel about senior management. This has to do with confidence in organizational leadership, trust, fairness, core values, and respect.

- **A Culture of Engagement**
  Does your organization have a culture that motivates, empowers, challenges, and respects employees?

- **Strategic Alignment**
  Do employees understand where the organization is headed and how they contribute to its success?

## 2. Engagement with Manager

This type of engagement is a more specific measure of how employees relate to their direct supervisors. This includes feeling valued, being treated fairly, receiving feedback and direction, and generally, having a solid working relationship between employee and manager based on mutual respect.

- **Motivating and Relating**
  Do managers motivate their employees to give their best? Are managers building solid relationships and developing a cohesive team?

- **Managing Execution**
  Are managers clearly defining expectations, holding employees accountable, and focused on delivering results?

# Methods to Increase Engagement

Retaining employees may be good, but keeping employees that want to be there is better. Maintaining employees that are enthusiastic, productive, and engaged is crucial. Here are some methods your organization can take to heighten engagement.



### 1. Transform Management

**It is often said that employees do not leave organizations; they leave managers.** With that said, managers are primarily responsible for the engagement levels of their employees. Mutual trust and respect between leaders, managers, and employees are critical to engagement and success. Leaders must move away from a command-and-control mindset to build engagement and a great workplace. They must provide employees the tools, environment, decision-making freedom, and anything else they need to get the job done as quickly as possible with minimal issues.

This approach requires a significant shift for most leaders, who must let go of everything they think they know and everything they've done in terms of management. Managers need to collaborate with their employees in developing plans to maintain engagement. As well as hold themselves accountable by making their workers' engagement part of their performance expectations and tracking the engagement of employees who report to them.

## 2. Begin at Onboarding

Tackling engagement from the begging of an employee's journey can set the tone. Training and onboarding new hires are some of the most important steps you can take to ensure employees are engaged at work. If an employee doesn't have a handle on their responsibilities, they won't be engaged. Instead, they'll be confused, frustrated, and rushed to catch up, leading to disengagement. Employees who better understand and handle their workload have a better shot at taking pride in what they do. Workers who are eager to meet their goals are engaged with the company.

With a successful onboarding and training program, employees will learn to do their job effectively. This is when they can engage with you and ask questions, offer ideas, and voice any concerns. The onboarding process also encourages relationships among employees. For most employees, this is when they bond with co-workers and develop a connection to the company. Studies have shown that the more friends employees have at work, the more engaged they are.
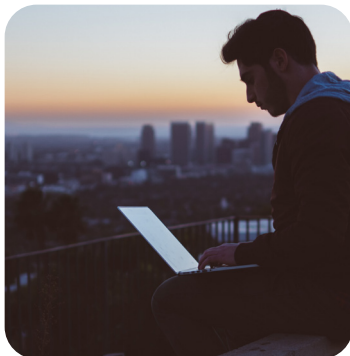
## 3. Encourage Flexibility

One of the secrets on how to increase employee engagement in the workplace is by giving flexibility to your employees. This gives your employees the freedom to adjust their work schedules or location to better suit their needs. Employees have the option to determine where and when they work. Deciding their schedules and work location can provide them with a better work-life balance.

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## 4. Focus On Employee Development

One of the greatest gifts organizations can provide employees is the opportunity to develop new skills and competencies. Job seekers accept positions for reasons like salary and benefits, but many workers also want the chance to grow their careers. Employees want to develop their skills and continue challenging themselves. They don't want to do monotonous tasks that require minimal effort.

You can focus on employee development in a few different ways. You might add new responsibilities to the employee's position, such as tasks and duties, allowing room for growth in the position. You can also emphasize employee development by offering training programs and educational opportunities. This is a great perk that enables employees to further their education. It shows employees that you value their career growth, and it also allows you to add new skills to your business.

## 5. Open Feedback Channels

Psychological safety is critically important to engagement. A key component of a psychologically safe workplace has the freedom and opportunity to openly provide and receive feedback to and from colleagues and managers. Employees want to receive feedback on their performance and regularly work towards learning and developing their skillset. They're usually the ones receiving feedback, but it is essential to ask for feedback.

Try asking your employees' input on certain things around the workplace, about managerial styles, asking their opinions during meetings, and so on. Feedback is needed for both parties, employees and your organization, to help draw attention to areas for improvement and continue pushing you on the right track. Having a safe environment that encourages open feedback makes everyone feel heard. By asking your employees for feedback, it makes them feel that their opinion matters, and it plays an essential part in the company's engagement and performance.

# How to Measure Employee Engagement

The first step to improving something is to measure it. Measuring employee engagement can be tricky because it's not always easy to define. Engagement can be an emotion, a state of mind, or a subliminal sense of connection. Committing to measuring and improving employee engagement also shows employees that you genuinely care about their wellbeing and are making a conscious effort to ensure they're happy at work. That itself can engage your employees even more.

## 1. Calculate your eNPS

Using the employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) is one of the most effective and straightforward ways to measure engagement. Unlike more qualitative employee engagement metrics, eNPS is excellent for getting a precise numeric engagement score. eNPS is calculated based on the difference between your most engaged and least engaged employee by asking two simple questions that truly gauge loyalty.

- On a scale from 10-0, how likely are you to recommend this organization as a place to work to a friend or colleague?

- An open-ended question asking them why they feel this way.

On a scale from 10-0, how likely are you to recommend this organization as a place to work to a friend or colleague?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Detractors        Passives        Promoters

## % Promoters - % Detractors = ENPs

## 2. One-On-One Meetings

Another great way to measure engagement is through one-on-one meetings with employees. Regularly scheduling these meetings where you can have an informal chat with each member of your team is a great way to get a real sense of what's going on with them. Meeting one-on-one, whether online or in-person, allows for more detailed and meaningful employee feedback while letting you gauge non-verbal cues.

The advantage of this method of collecting feedback is that it's a private safe conversation. You can get much more detail about each issue that's brought up. Managers should do their best to make employees feel safe opening up. Ask questions about company culture, personal goals, and work-life. Some questions you can ask include:

- What's one thing about your work experience that is positive?

- Name one thing about your work experience that needs significant improvement?

- What do you like about working here?

- What don't you like about working here?

- What are your long-term goals?

## 3. Pulse Surveys

Employee pulse surveys are great for getting quick, consistent, and actionable insights. Pulse surveys are short, focused surveys oriented around a specific question. They get more responses because of how concise they are and have even been proven to drive employee engagement. Email-based surveys streamline the feedback process, but asking simple yet meaningful employee engagement questions is key. Ask anywhere from 10-5 questions about how people feel at work and what they would change. Types of questions you can include:

**Satisfaction questions**: Does your team inspire you to do your best work?

**Opportunity questions:** Are there enough opportunities for growth in your current team?

**Alignment questions:** Do you think your leadership team considers your perspective on important decisions?



## 4. Use an Exit Survey

In an exit survey, engagement feedback is collected from employees who are ready to leave your company. These surveys are a treasure of honest insights because they come from people who are most likely to speak negatively about their experiences. This is because they don't feel like they're risking their job giving their honesty. Send personalized exit surveys to departing employees framed with short, simple questions. You can combine quantitative yes/no pulse survey questions with qualitative questions.

**Quantitative Questions:**

• Were you equipped to do your job well?
• Did you receive constructive feedback to help you improve your performance?

**Qualitative Feedback:**

• What was a key deciding factor that led you to accept a new position?
• Name one thing you liked most and least about your role.

# Act on Your Metrics

What do you do after you measure employee engagement? No matter what outcomes your employee engagement metrics show, it's important to continuously seek improvement even if the results seem promising. Engagement can quickly fluctuate if you don't properly maintain or build on your engagement strategies. Once you receive your engagement metrics, the following steps would be to communicate the results, pick a few things to improve, follow up, and repeat. Repeating the process over and over is crucial. Engagement takes time and will continuously evolve, so staying agile is essential. Knowing how to measure employee engagement will ensure that you can always address issues in a timely manner.

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