



WORKMATES
by HR Cloud

The Complete Guide to Employee Engagement



What is employee engagement and why is it so important for business? Find the answer to that question and more in this FREE Complete Guide to Employee Engagement.

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Engaged Employees are Healthier, Study Shows



Employers have known for some time that employee engagement is essential to the overall financial health of a business. According to a 2013 Gallup poll, 70% of employees are either “not engaged” or “actively disengaged,” costing the U.S. between \$450 billion to \$550 billion each year in lost productivity.



The findings, collected as part of the Gallup Employee Engagement tracking series and Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index from January 2014 through September 2015, show that workplace engagement does affect employees' physiological state to some degree. Here are some study highlights:

Disengagement Leads to Increase in “Unhealthy” Days

Actively disengaged workers, on average, have 2.17 unhealthy days per month, whereas their engaged counterparts have only 1.25 unhealthy days per month.

Disengagement has a Greater Effect on Health Than Age Does

While you might assume that older workers are more likely to experience unhealthy days, it appears that an employee's level of engagement is actually the determining factor.

For instance, employees between the ages of 20 and 29 report 1.82 unhealthy days, on average. Conversely, engaged employees between the ages of 40 to 49 only report 1.28 unhealthy days and engaged employees between the ages of 50 to 59 report 1.57 unhealthy days.

Types of Health Issues Vary

When asked about specific health-rated issues experienced in the preceding day, there was a marked divide between engaged and disengaged employees. Poll participants reported the following:

- Physical pain: 23% (disengaged); 14% (engaged)
- Stress: 56% (disengaged); 32% (engaged)
- High blood pressure: 19% (disengaged); 15% (engaged)
- High cholesterol: 15% (disengaged); 11% (engaged)
- Depression: 16% (disengaged); 9% (engaged)

These results indicate a definite correlation between employee engagement and physical health. What does this all mean for your business?

Actionable Intel

Considering the high cost of employee unproductivity and the apparent relationship between engagement and employee health, it becomes imperative for businesses to bolster their engagement strategies.

While much emphasis has been placed in recent years on employee wellness programs in an effort to improve healthcare outcomes and bend the cost curve for employer-sponsored health plans, it may be time to re-focus on employee engagement as a way to enhance those benefits.

According to the National Business Research Institute, there are several things that can be done to improve levels of employee engagement.

On the executive level, the main focus should be on:

- Building trust within the organization from the top down.
- Communicating frequently and clearly with all employees.
- Creating a company culture that nurtures success.

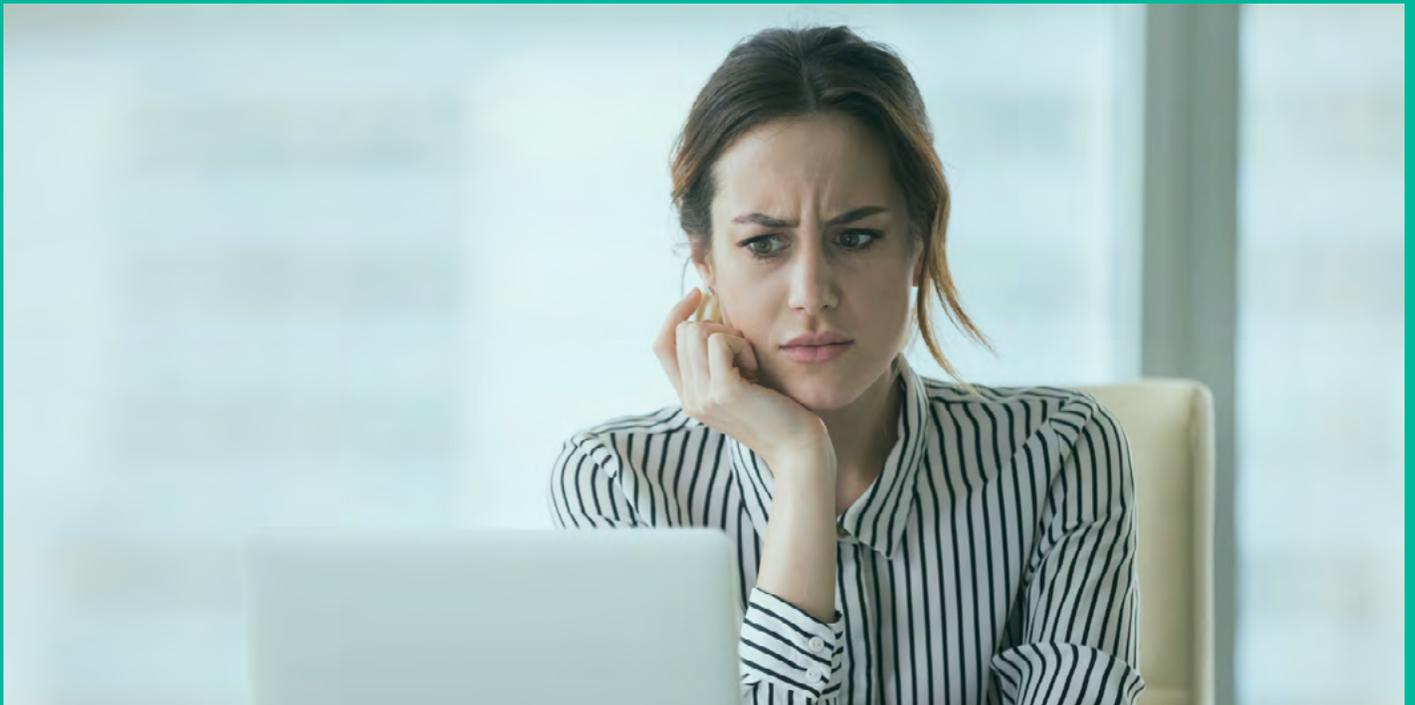
On the managerial level, the main focus should be on:

- Coaching and mentoring employees from onboarding forward.
- Building relationships that include trust and mutual respect.
- Maintaining an open dialogue with staff at all times.
- Encouraging employee ownership of behaviors and attitudes.
- Providing clarity of purpose.
- Setting motivating goals and issuing appropriate rewards when they are met.

Common Mistakes



Employee engagement is an important part of your business's bottom line. Without it, you will experience high employee turnover and low morale. The following sections cover common engagement failures, organizations that faced them, and how to do better than them. So if you and your leadership team are ready for changes within your engagement system, here we go.



1. Failing to Communicate

The business may be booming, but that does not mean you can stop proactively listening to your employees. This means scheduling time for Q&As or circulating surveys. They need to know that you are keeping them informed and taking their advice and complaints seriously. Your business may be your baby but healthy employee engagement comes from the common endeavor, which means they have to be proud of it too.

Nike is a prime example of what happens when employees' concerns are ignored, and individuals are discouraged from voicing their concerns. In 2018, the company made headlines after numerous women came forward to news outlets discussing a toxic workplace environment. Nike did implement changes to address these problems, not before their brand took a lot of damage.

How can your company ensure lines of communication remain open? Regularly scheduled one-on-one sessions are a big way to make sure everyone's voice is heard. Email communication is another way to involve multiple individuals in a conversation. But even if you speak with all your employees on a regular basis, do not lull yourself into a false sense of security. Be open with your teams and tell them you want to address their concerns, which will go a long way in overcoming engagement issues.

2. Not Recognizing Employees' Work

Everyone enjoys recognition for a job well done. Your employees work hard to hit deadlines and present the best-finished product. A failure to give praise or an acknowledgment of this dedication will lead to poor performance and morale. Implementing a recognition program for top performers in your organization isn't that hard. From weekly chat messages to company-wide eblasts, all of these are ways to shine a spotlight on your employees of the week.

The global hotel chain, Hilton, implemented a recognition calendar program for employees. This calendar included tips for managers on how to highlight individuals during each month of the year. The program was a great success for the company, especially with keeping

individuals engaged in their job.

But it's not just current employees that benefit from a culture of recognition. Prospective employees can look up your company's recognition program or hear about it by word of mouth. If you have a great system in place then you can hook some great new individuals for your business.

3. Preventing Individual Skill Development

Your industry is always changing and evolving and the same goes for your employees. They want to expand their skill set to improve their personal performance and your organization's results too. But when you hamper any opportunities for education, then your workers end up in a rut. Supporting attendance at virtual events or signing up for educational websites will go a long way in preventing boredom and complacency.



AT&T created its own university program for continuing education amongst its employees. The leadership-led program helps employees learn not only about their current position but sets them up for success with future roles within the business. But the company does not just rely on its special university program, it's also developed other initiatives to help with continued learning opportunities.

Although you may not have the resources to create your own learning program, there are still lots of free resources for your business to utilize. Whether it's masterclasses on YouTube or your own manager's presentations, offering skill development is a big plus for employee engagement.

4. Overlooking Support Staff

Do not forget your behind-the-scenes people, they're the ones that are a big part of making your company run smoothly. Whether it's cleaning staff or part-time employees, they need their moments of recognition too. Although their work isn't as directly vital to your immediate success your business will still grind to a halt without your cafeteria staff.

Food delivery company DoorDash soured its relationship with its drivers when they failed to properly reimburse them for their services. Although DoorDash's business model relies on delivery drivers, the drivers didn't feel they were properly paid for their service and created their own campaign to improve pay. Instead of listening to their employees, DoorDash ignored them.

To avoid a problem like this in your organization, don't forget all the people that make it a success. Proper pay, recognition, and little acts of kindness go a long way in making your support staff feel appreciated.

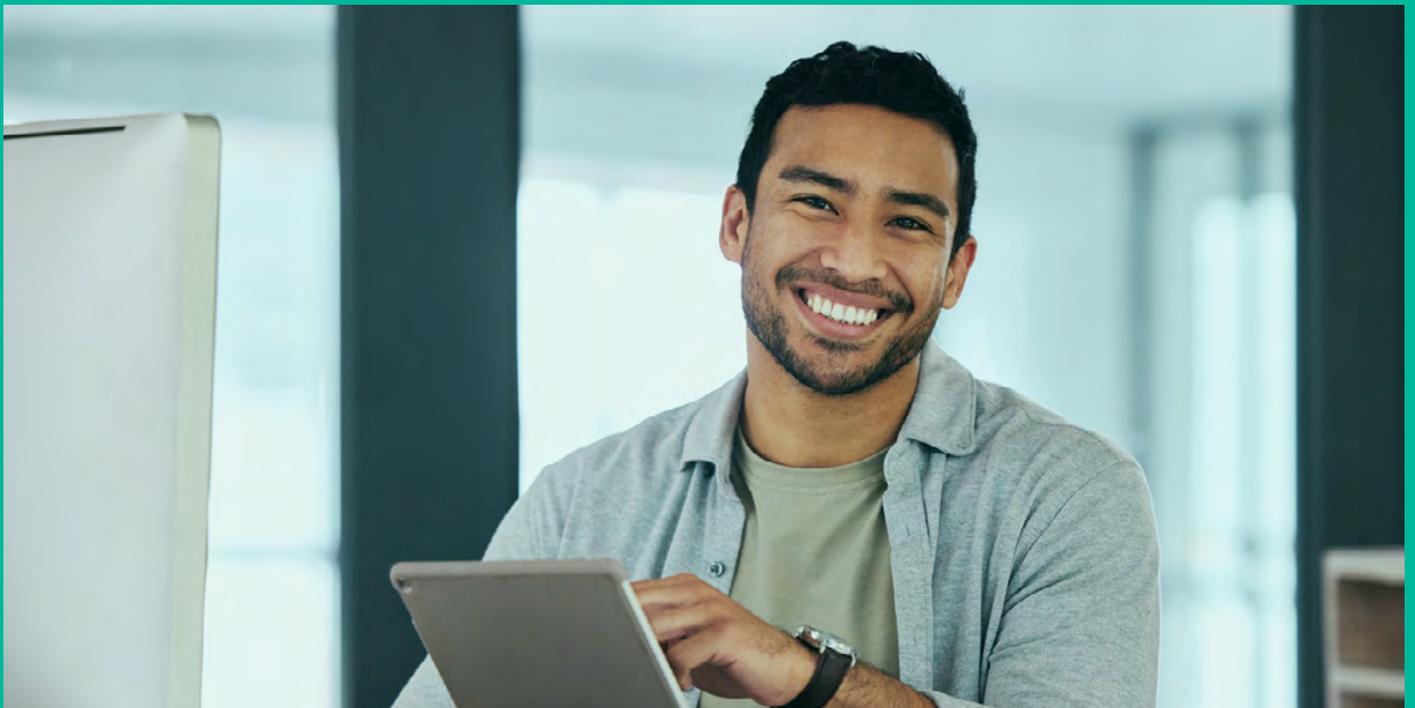
5. Thinking Engagement is a One-and-Done Session

All right, now that you've scheduled your monthly meeting with your staff, that's enough of an investment in employee engagement, right? Wrong! Your relationship with your team is an ongoing process and it involves constant work on your end.

How to Maintain a Work Life Balance



Work-life balance is not a new concept but it has been a trending buzzword between companies from small startups to big organizations. For most people, the work ends at the end of the evening but for others, it eats away at their evenings, nights, and even weekends. Companies that encourage a work-life balance have been flaunting it as a perk and using it to attract young passionate talent, and most of the time, it works! This practice can really help small start-ups too.



1. Provide Family Support

Often companies lose spectacular talent, especially parents and people with old parents, because they don't provide enough support. Providing paternity, maternity or shared parental leave ensures the employees are fresh and maintain a good work-life balance.

This support can be offered in the form of childcare or parent care support costs. Other ways include offering part-time or job shares roles. AirMason, an online employee handbook software can be used to add these benefits to the employee handbook, and update them from time to time! Employees feel empowered in organizations where they know they can finish work early, go see their physician, get their boilers fixed, or go to their kid's recitals. This also creates a sense of trust and security that their employers know they will get the work done.

2. Encourage Physical Activity

Employees are known to perform better when they are physically and mentally active. The company can arrange monthly or weekly hiking trips to encourage physical activity and create a good relationship with the employees. Some companies also have gyms inside the office building so the employees can get some exercise during their break or at the end of the day to lay off some steam.

It also works with clients too. If you are going for something outside the box, change of venue always helps. It cultivates the feeling of freedom when you are not trapped inside a box behind a desk.

3. Flexible Hours

Rather than focus on the hours punched in, managers should focus on the tasks done by employees and the quality of those tasks. This is not to say to burden employees on one day and not burden them on other days. But to create a sense of meaning between employees and the company. Employees who are stuck in cubicles no matter how decorated they are will get fed up. It is important to monitor employee productivity over the work hours they put in. Let your employees work from different settings and communicate via email,

project management software, text, and calls. This flexibility motivates employees to work wholeheartedly.

4. Foster Creativity

In addition to physical health, employees should be given time and encouraged to take on their creative projects. This kind of time and space are given to employees manifests itself in the form of the kind of outside-the-box thinking that will benefit your business in the long run. Some companies offer a 20% program, which is to let their employees work 20% of their time in the office on creative side projects. Your workers will appreciate you for this and their other skills might solve problems on the job too.

Most conversations about boosting productivity in the workplace revolve around what employees should do to set boundaries and prioritize. As an employer showing interest and encouraging a healthy balance communicates that you respect and value your employees as human beings as much as you care about their job performances.



5. Regularly Review Workloads

Reviewing workloads regularly is a great way to ensure and enforce the concept of work-life balance throughout the organization. This also helps in knowing whether the team has achievable goals and if not what obstacles could be removed from their ways to make it easier.

Moreover, managers who are regularly engaged with their team in the form of small talk or meetings or even weekly lunches will know more about who is stressed, overworked, or busy with something at home and could use a break from work. Ask your staff to rate at the end of the day if they are overworked, right, or have spare capacity.

The company should ensure senior management is also enjoying a good work-life balance too. This is a great way to set an example in the organization.

6. Lose the Office Somedays

Losing the office doesn't necessarily mean shifting your entire team to work from home as a lot of businesses don't have the liberty to do so such as Gaming studios, factory workers, etc.

Change of office space whether you send a couple of your employees to some co-working space every week or any other place they could get a fresh eye. This not only helps them network with people but also gets their productivity back on its horse.

100% work from home is a good idea for companies that can manage it efficiently. CEOs of Exposure Ninja have recently announced plans to make work from home permanent because they have realized that it not only saves the company money but also increases employee productivity and wellbeing.

7. Community Engagement Time

Another way to form a good association between the time at work and outside work is to offer paid community service time. These community or volunteer services help the company

gain back its sense of purpose and give the employees meaning and benefit as well. E.g The company could consider offering 8 hours of paid volunteer work every year to its employees.

According to Pew Research Center, millennials are more motivated by working for social causes. This opportunity shouldn't be confined to millennials only as this makes employees feel generally good about themselves.

8. Learning Days

The giant of the self-help industry and one of the biggest learning platforms, Mindvalley, regularly practices what we call "Learning Fridays". This day is completely dedicated to learning about anything that will improve your professional career. This day was encouraged as a holiday at home to learn something but people generally have a lot to do at home, so giving an extra day off for learning isn't the solution.

On a Learning Friday, you have to come to the office but not for work. This is only to give you free time to learn and be up to date with the fast-paced world. The employee could read a book, listen to podcasts or work on their business ideas or do anything else but they have to come to the office.

9. Create "Quiet Space"

Every once in a while we all have our bad days and so do our employees. This is where the quiet space comes into play. It is a designated spot at the office where you could just switch off and relax for a bit when employees need a mental break.

This space should be free from company materials & shall be peacefully uncluttered. Comfortable seating, luscious green plants, reading material, and soothing music would make this place a paradise. Precedence should be established that this place is not for employee venting, chatting, or laughter rather this is a place to reflect in silence and respect each other's solitude.

10. Talk To Your Employees

Who better to consult than the person for whom everything is being arranged? Get regular feedback from your employees on what they need to feel productive and relaxed. If someone is struggling with work-life balance, ask them what changes might help them. Feedback is a gift to both the employer and employee.

The feedback meetings are difficult as employees often fear getting fired. These meetings should be held quarterly or monthly as per the company and employee's convenience. Although to get genuine feedback a general culture of transparent communication shall be cultivated beforehand.

It all comes down to whether an organization is people-centric or not. The benefits of work-life balance to your team and your company will be beyond phenomenal. Company's need to keep everything flexible with discipline to attract and retain top talent. Just remember that every employee is different and might require a tailored experience.



Trends and Best Ways to Drive Employee Engagement



Below are 10 initiatives for employee engagement that are relevant for 2022. If you really want to know what employees feel and what they are looking for in 2022, carefully study this chapter.



1. Application of the Human-Centered Approach to Personnel Management

To create an organization that can be effective in today's flow of change, it is recommended to perform a people-centered approach to improve employee management. This means that businesses need to clearly define their mission, set a unique value proposition for the employer. Furthermore, it is important to anticipate and develop future skills in employees, manage the involvement and satisfaction of the team of specialists.

2. Application of the Strategic Planning Function

The strategic personnel planning function allows firms to make balanced decisions about the involvement of specialists needed to realize business strategy. Personnel planning is essential for business success. Therefore, one of the most significant employee engagement trends in 2022 is investing in staff training. Effective training, which aims to provide employees with important educational information, allows developing the valuable skills and abilities that are necessary for the successful growth of the company.

HR professionals should also apply HR analytics instruments for strategic planning and review engaging a combined workforce. Increasingly, modern firms attract not only full-time employees but also freelancers. According to estimates, their share in the overall structure of the company's workforce will be over 30% in the next few years.

3. Establishing an Effective Employee Adaptation Process

Practice shows that up to 20% of layoffs occur in the first 45 days of work. This testifies to the importance of new employees' adaptation. You shouldn't only be concerned about engagement when a new employee is hired. It should have the highest priority right from the start.

4. Determining What Motivates Employees

It all starts with engagement research. Companies usually start with employee surveys to identify motivating factors.

5. Premature Assessment of the Employee's Condition

It is a daily task for an HR specialist to clearly and timely notice a decrease in employee motivation and engagement. He must be able to identify and work with alarms. Signs of professional burnout can be reduced work efficiency, regularly bad mood, apathy, etc.

6. Building Close Communication

According to research, about a third of employees would like their manager to contact them more often. Lack of effective communication is often the reason for low productivity. Indeed, often employees cannot understand what exactly is expected of them, and it is simply not possible to clarify. In addition, regular meetings with management give employees a clearer understanding of the company's values, priorities, and goals. Therefore, building close communication with employees is one of the employment trends in 2022.

7. Focusing on the Strengths of the Employee

Another trend that is gaining popularity is to give employees tasks based on their strengths and personal interests. At the same time, the employee's job responsibilities will have a secondary role. Interest-based work will allow the employee to demonstrate maximum results. In addition, it will help prevent the great resignation of employees.

8. Employee Encouragement

Employee engagement 2022 is impossible without a sense of its own value and significance. If the employee sees that his work is appreciated, he will respond with an even greater result. It will not be superfluous to indicate to the employee a certain set of advantages that the company is ready to give him for good work. This can include, for example, the ability to work remotely or offset the schedule by one to two hours.

9. Giving Employees More Empowerment and Growth Opportunities

Companies with the best employee engagement demonstrate that activities that employees themselves propose and organize have the best impact on motivation and engagement. They

don't have to be purely entertaining. They should help personal and professional employee development, reflect the importance of daily work. Thus, HR professionals must move in 2022 from creating policies, procedures, and event design to empowering employees to implement initiatives themselves.

10. Providing Employees with Opportunities to Gain Experience (Even Through Their Own Mistakes)

Professionalism comes with employee experience, and experience comes with practice. That is, you can organize your team so that it can feel a sense and cope with all the difficulties autonomously and independently. Of course, when a problem requires a prompt response, you cannot give employees the time to find the best solution themselves. But some situations do not require an instant solution. Therefore, you need to allow employees to express themselves.



Why Workmates: Engagement Solutions

Workmates now gives you an easy-to-use, flexible, and powerful employee engagement and recognition platform that integrates with your enterprise systems.

Investing in Workmates will help you increase sales, create a positive culture, engage a happier workforce reduce turnover and improve its financial performance.



Why Customers Love Workmates

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Workmate's communication app provided a more extensive list of features we were looking for including a recognition component that would allow for peer to peer recognition across the company. The communication app also provided opportunities for customization and branding across the platform."



Danielle Nickerson | Human Resource Specialist



"Our staff has praised the increased communications level Workmates delivers. We use it to communicate important project matters and give staff specific 'kudos' or even recognize their birthdays. More importantly, we use Workmates to clarify important project details that needed rapid dissemination among the entire team."



Christopher Baggott | Chief Executive Officer