

MOVE, MOULD, MOTIVATE:

AN ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

EMPLOYEE & CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT | *Bringing people and business together*

INTRODUCTION: THE CURRENT CLIMATE



IT'S TIME FOR A RETHINK

Hungry for innovation and profitability, our 'always on' world is a hectic place to be – and the modern workforce is feeling the strain.

While the UK struggles to come to terms with its productivity crisis (we've seen a further 7% shrinkage in 2017), workplace stress is on the up. According to the Health and Safety Executive, stress accounted for 37% of all work related ill health cases, and 45% of all working days lost due to ill health in 2015/2016.

These numbers are massive. With 163 million annual leave days going unused last year, it's clear UK employees are overworked – and yet we sit 17th in the world when it comes to productivity, in the shadow of other big economies such as the USA and Germany.

People are putting in the hours, but something is missing.

With the pressures of competition and constant economic fluctuation, organisations must take a long hard look in the mirror and find new ways to attract and retain top talent.

It's time for a rethink.



NEW EXPECTATIONS

We've come a long way since confectionery giant Cadbury began sweetening the employment experience in the early part of the last century.

The company, which was one of the first to offer sick pay and pension rights for women, also gave staff a place to live, access to education, and medical facilities, trailblazing the way in a new era of employee relations and welfare.

Of course, the modern workforce has changed since then.

Employees now expect more from employers as standard – what they have to offer, their values, and the workplace environment. People are empowered in their job searches, asking themselves 'what type of employer do I want to work for?' and hand-picking companies for their 'employer of choice' shortlist.

Organisations want productivity and growth, employees want work-life balance – **the burning question is how do we achieve both?**

The answer – employee engagement.

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A woman is shown in profile on the right side of the frame, holding a dandelion seed head with both hands. The background is a warm, golden sunset with a bright sun low on the horizon, creating a soft, hazy glow. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

PART ONE: WHAT IS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT?

THE SEARCH FOR MEANING

Employee engagement is trending.

From boardroom meetings and water-cooler rendezvous, to academic publishers and industry speakers, we're not short of discourse on the subject. But while a massive **90% of executives understand the importance of employee engagement**, many businesses are still struggling to figure out what it actually means in a practical sense.

It's a tough grasp. But make no mistake, some real thought has gone into the personal and commercial reasoning behind engagement. There's still plenty of opportunity for employers to put their finger to the wind and get a feel for what it's all about...

EXPLAINING ENGAGEMENT

One interesting take on engagement came from Maslach and Leiter, who positioned it as the polar opposite to burn-out (the endgame of stress), at the end of a far-reaching employee well-being spectrum.

Burnout is defined by exhaustion, cynicism and reduced professional efficacy, which would suggest that engaged employees embody the three distinct traits: energy, optimism and heightened performance in the workplace.

But this assumption was thrown into the air when Schaufeli & Bakker found engaged employees scoring high on burn-out tests. Both states can impact each other, but they're far from mutually dependent.

Employee engagement is much more than a convenient opposition to burnout.



**COMPANIES NEED TO EXPAND
THEIR THINKING ABOUT WHAT
“ENGAGEMENT” MEANS TODAY.**

(Josh Bersin, Principal and Founder Of Bersin By Deloitte)



However the main principles of engagement (energy, optimism and performance) still remain the same, according to Sodexo UK's Director of Employee Benefits, James Malia, "If your people truly believe in what they're doing, they're going to be energised, inspired and loyal to the business, and to you as their leader".

In other words, engaged employees are immersed. Psychologically, socially and culturally.

It's this belief in the mission and purpose of the business that fuels an emotional connection between employee, employer and their work. However, the sobering reality is that overall employee engagement is flat year over year (Glassdoor).




ENGAGEMENT CAN BE DISTILLED DOWN TO ANY EMPLOYEE WHO HAS THEIR HEART AND MIND IN THE JOB.

THIS MEANS INVOLVEMENT, ENTHUSIASM AND LOYALTY. IT'S THE PASSION AND THE MENTAL FOCUS TO NOT JUST DO A JOB, BUT TO DO AN EXCEPTIONAL JOB...

(Iain Thomson, Director of
Incentive and Recognition, Sodexo UK)



A man and a woman are in a meeting room, working on a large wall covered with many colorful sticky notes. The man, wearing glasses and a dark blue shirt, is pointing at a note with a blue pen. The woman, with dark hair and wearing a patterned sweater, is also pointing at a note. The room has a large window in the background, letting in natural light.

PART ONE: WHAT IS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT?

What we have to understand is that employee engagement isn't a hard, fast, immediate fix. As Sodexo UK's Director of Incentive and Recognition, Iain Thomson explains "Employee engagement isn't a target that can be handed out today and achieved tomorrow. It comes from the beating heart of the organisation."

This is about the day to day stuff and the humans behind the business. From how you move your people to emotionally invest in you, to how you enable (or mould) them to fulfil their potential, and the ways you motivate them to want to do more.

It's the reason people get out of bed in the morning with their **head in the game**.

ENGAGEMENT VS. HAPPINESS

Happiness and engagement are often lazily lumped into the same category.

It's a pretty short-sighted thing to do when you really look at it. Both are extremely important. But blurred lines between the two can do more harm than good.

▯▯ **MEASURING HAPPINESS IS ABOUT AS EASY AS TAKING THE TEMPERATURE OF THE SOUL OR DETERMINING THE EXACT COLOUR OF LOVE.** ▯▯

(André Spicer and Carl Cederström)

Happiness is an unpredictable emotion, that's hard to bottle, manage or measure.

It may stand to reason that short, sharp bursts of immediate happiness can be achieved when people experience positive events in their working life such as job promotions, recognition

and pay rises. However when we look at Michael Eysenck's "Hedonic Treadmill Theory," it's obvious that 'increasing' a person's happiness, for the most part, is out of the employer's control.

▯▯ **THE HEDONIC TREADMILL THEORY** SUGGESTS THAT, NO MATTER WHAT, HUMANS WILL ALWAYS RETURN TO THE SAME BASELINE OF HAPPINESS. THE EVENTS WHICH MAKE, OR ARE PERCEIVED TO MAKE, PEOPLE HAPPY OR SAD CAN ONLY HAVE AN IMPACT ON THEM FOR A LIMITED AMOUNT OF TIME. ▯▯

(Fenja Ziegler, Senior Psychology Lecturer, University of Lincoln)





PART ONE: WHAT IS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT?

Truth is, happiness goes beyond the workplace. It's an ambiguous emotion that feeds off every aspect of our wider, complex lives of which our jobs are just one aspect.

We can, of course, do everything in our power to boost morale and support our unhappy employees. But the moral of the story is that happiness doesn't equate to engagement –

and to assume any different will only muddy your organisation's strategy.

Ultimately, for employers wanting to get the best out of their people, drive productivity, and elevate business performance, engagement has to be the principal focus.



YOU DON'T NEED TO SACRIFICE ONE FOR THE OTHER, BUT STOP CREATING AN EQUIVALENCY BETWEEN THE TWO. TELL YOUR MANAGERS AND YOUR EMPLOYEES THAT WHILE YOU THINK THEIR HAPPINESS IS IMPORTANT, THEIR ENGAGEMENT IS CRUCIAL.

(Maren Hogan, Founder and CEO, Red Branch Media)



WHAT DOES ENGAGEMENT LOOK LIKE?

It's far easier to spot a disengaged employee than an engaged one. That's because they tend to stick out like a sore thumb. Negativity in any form takes up employers' attention, and for this reason, day to day signs of engagement go under the radar or are simply ignored.

A man, a woman, and a child are sitting outdoors at night. The man and woman are standing and looking at a small object in the woman's hands. The child is sitting in a chair, looking towards the camera. They are all smiling and appear to be enjoying their time together. String lights are hanging above them, casting a warm glow.

PART ONE: WHAT IS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT?

THE KEY TRAITS OF AN ENGAGED EMPLOYEE

GOING THE EXTRA MILE:

These are the people who go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get the best possible results from their work. They're ready to graft for the business.

▯▯ **82% OF ENGAGED EMPLOYEES SAY THEY GO ABOVE AND BEYOND WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THEM.** ▯▯

(HCI Research)

TRUST IN SENIORS:

They have confidence in their managers to treat them fairly and make the right decisions for the business. They show willingness to cooperate and adapt whenever they're asked to do so.

HUNGRY FOR A CHALLENGE:

They have the capacity to take on new responsibilities, relish the chance to try their hand at new skills and are happy to hold themselves accountable for their output.

▯▯ **91% OF ENGAGED WORKERS FEEL CHALLENGED AND UTILISED AT WORK.** ▯▯

(HCI Research)

MOTIVATE THEIR PEERS:

They show commitment to driving results and have no problem with helping others whether called upon or not. They bring a positivity to the team which rubs off on those around them.

LOYAL ADVOCATES:

They see their long term future in the business and won't hesitate to recommend the organisation as both an employee and service provider.

▯▯ **90% OF ENGAGED EMPLOYEES
FEEL A SENSE OF COMMITMENT
AND/OR DEDICATION TO THEIR
COMPANY.** ▯▯

(HCI Research)

PART OF THE DNA OF THE BUSINESS:

They get the sense that they're being given rein to make a meaningful difference within the organisation, feel valued by their managers and know their presence matters.

DISCRETIONARY EFFORT

For a long time it was assumed that humans were primarily logic-based thinkers.

Behavioural scientists now know our behaviour is far more complex than that. We interviewed Dr. Fenja Ziegler, Principal Lecturer in the School of Psychology, University of Lincoln to find out more. Fenja explains the way people behave and make decisions based on her own research and that of others in the field...

"We're not rational beings. When people build emotional connections with their employer, they will naturally give more than minimum effort. This factor, which is intrinsically linked to engagement, rather than logical thought, is called 'Discretionary Effort'.

Discretionary effort is the difference between what you have to do, and what you want to do in the workplace. It's something that has to be earned by the employer, but this is just one part of the jigsaw puzzle – and working harder doesn't necessarily mean working smarter.



**MANY ORGANISATIONS MANAGE PERFORMANCE IN
SUCH A WAY THAT MOTIVATES EMPLOYEES TO DO ONLY
ENOUGH TO GET BY AND AVOID GETTING IN TROUBLE.**

(Aubrey Daniels International)



The real focus should be on empowering the employee. Only then will an organisation see the tangible benefits of employee engagement.



SHOW EMPLOYEES HOW THEIR WORK MATTERS TO THE ORGANIZATION, TO OTHERS, TO THE WORLD.

**GIVE PEOPLE THE RESOURCES THEY NEED
TO DO GREAT WORK AND THE AUTHORITY
AND AUTONOMY TO DO THAT WORK.**

ALLOW THEM TO TRY NEW THINGS AND MAKE MISTAKES. CREATE A WORKPLACE
WHERE IT IS SAFE AND ENCOURAGED FOR EVERYONE TO BE THEMSELVES.

(Heather Bussing, HR Examiner)



PART TWO: WHY IS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IMPORTANT?

“Keeping hold of top talent is really important for any organisation wanting to grow and thrive in a competitive market” says Sodexo UK’s Head of Sales and Client Services, Jonathan Bedford.

According to Oxford Economics, the cost to replace a single employee is a mighty £30,000!

It’s no secret that many organisations have an ongoing problem with employee churn rates. High turnover means loss of productivity, it means a knowledge gap, and a workforce that’s less familiar with daily tasks and company culture.



// ORGANISATIONS INVEST A LOT OF TIME AND EFFORT INTO TRAINING THEIR PEOPLE. BUT IF JUST ONE TEAM MEMBER JUMPS SHIP YOU'VE GOT TO DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN.

Constantly having to get people up to speed is frustrating and damaging for the bottom line of the business. //

(Jonathan Bedford, Sodexo UK)

Employee turnover is just one symptom of a disengaged workforce. But let's take an optimistic look at things. Get your engagement strategy right and the rewards are HUGE...

PART TWO: WHY IS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IMPORTANT?



SIX BENEFITS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

01 PRODUCTIVITY

Productivity is at the top of most boardroom agendas. There's no ignoring its importance, and the role of employee engagement in driving better results.

▮▮ TEAMS WITH HIGH EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT RATES ARE 22% MORE PRODUCTIVE. ▮▮

(Gallup)

Bain and Company's Michael Mankins describes productivity as "doing more with the same," as opposed to the concept of efficiency which he suggests is "doing more with less".

▮▮ PRODUCTIVITY IS ABOUT EXPANDING THE OUTPUT, IN ORDER TO DELIVER GREATER TOP-LINE GROWTH FROM THE SAME WORKFORCE. ▮▮

(Michael Mankins)

Employers want to get more from their workforce without making cutbacks on overheads, wages, employee numbers and man hours. It's key to business growth.

PART TWO: WHY IS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IMPORTANT?

02 EMPLOYEE RETENTION

The CLC reports that highly engaged organisations have the potential to reduce staff turnover by 87%. Which is great news. Employee churn is one of the biggest problems facing organisations.



IT TAKES EMPLOYERS AN AVERAGE OF 28 WEEKS TO GET A NEW RECRUIT UP TO SPEED.

(Oxford Economics)



A 2016 study by Deloitte found an eye-watering two-thirds of millennials hope to have moved on to another employer by 2020. In the UK alone, this figure rises to 71%.

While 47% of Millennials think SMEs are the ideal business size to work for (compared to the 19% who cited larger companies are the ideal size), most are still unable to keep hold of their best talent for any longer than 4 years. (Sodexo Engage Survey)

Iain McMath explains, “although big businesses are having trouble attracting the best candidates, they’re more likely to keep them once through the door.”

‘Job-hopping’ is a growing trend. In fact, 45% of employees are planning to stay with their employer for less than two years. This isn’t the baby-boomer era anymore. The modern workforce is far less willing to commit long term to their organisation.



40 TO 50% OF THE WORKFORCE ARE MILLENNIALS. IF YOU’RE NOT TAKING CARE OF A BIG CHUNK OF YOUR WORKFORCE NOW, THEN YOU’RE ALREADY BEHIND YOUR COMPETITORS.



(Dimple Agarwal)

Employers must work harder than ever before to retain employees – especially top talent. But those who manage it will get ahead in a feisty global market.

03 ATTENDANCE

Aon Hewitt report that companies with highly engaged staff find employees taking an average of 7 absence days a year. As opposed to low engagement companies who log an average for 14 days per employee.

However, we're seeing some promising improvement in this space, with UK workers in 2017 recording their lowest rate of sick days (4.3) since records began (Office for National Statistics).



BEHIND EVERY SUCCESSFUL ORGANISATION IS ITS PEOPLE.

BY ESTABLISHING AND NURTURING A POSITIVE WORKING ENVIRONMENT THAT PRIORITISES OPEN AND INSPIRING COMMUNICATION, WE CAN KEEP PEOPLE HEALTHY AND MOTIVATE THEM TO COME INTO WORK WITH VIGOUR.

(Jacquie Mills, Head of Client Operations, Employee Benefits at Sodexo)



It might seem obvious, but low employee attendance is bad for business.

From a cheeky sick day to something more serious, like stress-related illness or workplace injuries, absenteeism impacts on productivity. It also puts pressure on engaged employees too, those who are left to pick up the slack and are put at risk of becoming disengaged, should they see no efforts made to improve attendance across the organisation.

However, with the right strategy in place, one that takes an effective approach to employee wellness and motivation, these scenarios are potentially avoidable.



HIGHER WORKPLACE ENGAGEMENT LEADS TO 37% LOWER ABSENTEEISM AND 41% FEWER SAFETY INCIDENTS.

(Gallup)

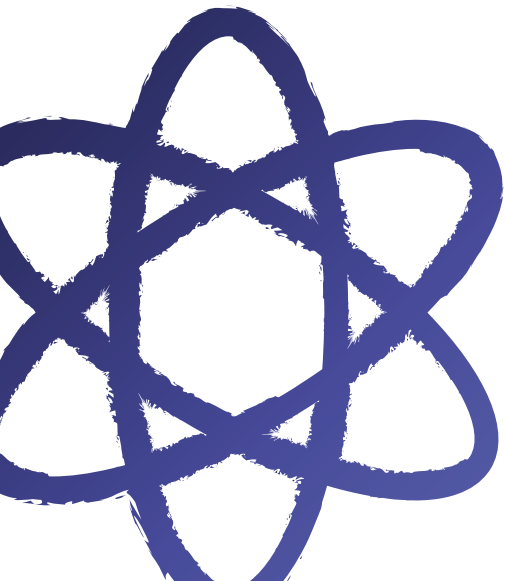


PART TWO: WHY IS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IMPORTANT?

04 INNOVATION

For SMEs and startups, innovation has become a necessity in order to survive and thrive. We see small businesses constantly rocking the boat and disrupting markets. Delivering new technology and service concepts with small, close-knit teams and an agile set up.

This is more than a minor nuisance for large corporations who, despite having the financial clout to aggressively develop new products, still regularly come up against roadblocks to creative thinking and innovation due to their complex hierarchies and process driven strategies.



RESEARCH INDICATES THAT **WORKPLACE ENGAGEMENT IS A POWERFUL FACTOR IN CATALYSING “OUTSIDE-THE-BOX” THINKING TO IMPROVE MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS PROCESSES AS WELL AS CUSTOMER SERVICE.**

(Gallup)



The grass may be greener for small businesses in terms of agile innovation, but the fact still remains that a disengaged workforce is a less creative one. Whether you've got 5 people or 500 employees, the innovative thinking that drives business growth starts at grassroots level.

Engaged employees are more open to sharing their best ideas – and ideas are priceless.

“**59%** OF ENGAGED EMPLOYEES SAID THEIR JOBS BRINGS OUT THEIR MOST CREATIVE IDEAS AS OPPOSED TO **3%** OF THOSE LESS ENGAGED.”

(GMI)



05 REPUTATION AND RECRUITMENT

When employees become advocates for your organisation, when they really believe in the business, they take their work home with them – and not just in the literal sense.



HIGHLY ENGAGED EMPLOYEES

**ARE MORE THAN FIVE TIMES AS LIKELY
TO RECOMMEND THAT A FRIEND OR RELATIVE
APPLY FOR A JOB AT THEIR COMPANY.**

(Temkin Group)



PART TWO: WHY IS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IMPORTANT?

Engaged employees are an employer's biggest asset and those who fail to understand this will push their company's reputation into decline.

Just look at Uber – one of the biggest disruptors since the turn of the millennium. The innovative global taxi business was denounced by the Chair of the Work and Pensions Select Committee, Frank Field, in 2016 for treating workers as Victorian-style “sweated labour”.

Good or bad – word spreads.

Employers can transform their workforce into a team of relentless ambassadors by prioritising welfare and nurturing a culture of engagement.

What's more, businesses with highly engaged employees receive 100% more job applications (Queen's School of Business), meaning greater chance of finding top talent.



**67% OF ENGAGED EMPLOYEES ARE
HAPPY TO ACT AS ADVOCATES FOR
THEIR ORGANISATION, COMPARED TO
3% OF DISENGAGED EMPLOYEES.**

(Gallup)





06 CUSTOMER RETENTION

Inspiring engagement, and educating people to help them work smarter, will boost both the employee experience and the customer experience.

Cvent's benchmark study found that "customer retention rates are 18% higher on average when employees are highly engaged". Which, when you think about it, isn't all that surprising.

▮▮ **70% OF ENGAGED EMPLOYEES HAVE A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF CUSTOMER NEEDS, COMPARED TO JUST 17% OF DISENGAGED EMPLOYEES.** ▮▮

(Right Management)

Engaged employees know their organisation inside-out. They're au fait with the purpose and values. They're passionate about the mission, and have a greater understanding of the audience the business is trying to reach.

By adopting an employee-focused culture, organisations will empower their staff to build better customer relationships through knowledge and empathy for the buyer's needs, and a genuine desire to help them.

▮▮ **ENGAGED EMPLOYEES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR 80% OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION.** ▮▮

(David MacLeod and Nita Clarke)

If a customer sees that the employee cares about both them and the organisation, they're more likely to care too. This isn't just a 'nice to have' either. An improved customer experience will drive sales, satisfaction and repeat purchase.

It humanises the process and makes good business sense.

THE NOT-SO-SECRET SEVENTH BENEFIT

Less of a benefit, more of a consequence, profitability is the number one reason for business growth. But it has to be earned – in more ways than one.

Like most things in life, you get what you put in, profitability is merely the tangible result at the end of the tunnel. It's the chief measure of how financially effective you and your team have been during the year, and a key benchmark for how much you've invested in employees.

▯▯ INCREASING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT INVESTMENTS BY **10%** CAN INCREASE PROFITS BY **\$2,400 (£1785)** PER EMPLOYEE PER YEAR. ▯▯

(Workplace Research Foundation)

Research from Gallup shows that companies with engaged workforces have higher earnings per share, and recovered from the recession at a faster rate.

In an unpredictable economic climate, engaged workforces are better prepared to stand firm, and actually empower their organisations. Not just to keep their heads above water, but to lead the way in national and international financial healing.

▯▯ WORK UNITS IN THE TOP QUARTILE FOR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT OUTPERFORMED BOTTOM-QUARTILE UNITS BY **10%** ON CUSTOMER RATINGS, **22%** IN PROFITABILITY. ▯▯

(Gallup)

Following the UK's decision to leave the EU, a CIPD study revealed that 44% of UK employees feel "pessimistic" about the future, and 22% less secure in their job roles.

With Brexit looming large, organisations will be bracing themselves for the unexpected. But those who are able to cultivate engagement through a differentiated employee experience can move forward into a new era with confidence and swagger.

PART TWO: WHY IS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IMPORTANT?



PART THREE: DIFFERENTIATING THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

CONNECTED EMPLOYEES, DISCONNECTED EXPERIENCE

Employee engagement initiatives are siloed. It's a chronic epidemic that's seen the spread of a disjointed employee experience that breeds greater disengagement.

Employees need stop atomising their approach to engagement. From culture to career progression, the overall employee experience (aka every interaction an employer has with their organisation) is the focal point.

It's everything that impacts on the workforce. The end-to-end experience that will ultimately decide whether or not a person becomes engaged in their job.





Research from Deloitte suggests that nearly 80% of executives rate employee experience as 'very important'. However only 22% report their companies as being excellent at building a differentiated experience.

Fusing together siloed initiatives such as performance management, goal setting, diversity, inclusion, wellness, workplace design and leadership, employers can begin to design and deliver an inclusive, personalised, downright irresistible experience.



THE MODERN WORKFORCE SEES EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS AT WORK AS AN INTEGRATED EXPERIENCE

**THAT IMPACTS DAILY LIFE IN AND OUTSIDE
THE WORKPLACE, INCLUDING OVERALL
PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, PROFESSIONAL,
AND FINANCIAL WELL-BEING.**

(Josh Bersin)





CONNECTING THE DOTS



PRODUCTIVE, POSITIVE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE HAS EMERGED AS THE NEW 'CONTRACT' BETWEEN EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE.

(Deloitte)



By the start of next decade, Millennials will form 50% of the global workforce (PWC). The employee demographic has changed and so must the employee experience.





MILLENNIALS HAVE A DIFFERENT WAY OF LEARNING, COMMUNICATING AND ENGAGING. TECHNOLOGY HAS GIVEN THEM, QUITE LITERALLY, A WORLD OF INFORMATION AT THEIR FINGERTIPS. **THEY EXPECT SPEED, EASE, EFFICIENCY AND MOBILITY IN EVERY ASPECT OF THEIR LIVES.**

(Sodexo, The Millennial Mindset)



Things are more complex than ever, and the demands can be overwhelming.

With technology bringing constant connectivity, we find it increasingly difficult to mentally clock out from our jobs. As Iain Thomson explains, “We’re now in a culture where we expect people, even when they’re on holiday, to be answerable – online, checking their phone, checking their emails. We’ve lost that sense of downtime”.

 WHILE IN EARLIER GENERATIONS YOU REALLY “WENT TO WORK” AND THEN “WENT HOME” WITHOUT BRINGING WORK HOME, WORK TODAY IS A 24-HOUR ALWAYS-ON EXPERIENCE. 

(Josh Bersin, Deloitte)

Like it or not, our jobs have become a bigger part of our wider lives, and so our experience as employees should support this.

Of course, HR still has an intrinsic role to play. But there’s a growing demand for a more holistic approach. It’s time to connect the dots and create a core strategy that goes back to the bare bones of the organisation and what it stands for.

This is a movement, not a tactical gambit. Employers must live their values, align business decisions with employee demand for work-life balance and hand responsibility to people across the organisation by building well-considered workstreams.



**ORGANISATIONS
ARE DEVELOPING AN
INTEGRATED FOCUS ON
THE ENTIRE EMPLOYEE
EXPERIENCE, BRINGING
TOGETHER ALL THE
WORKPLACE, HR, AND
MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
THAT IMPACT PEOPLE ON
THE JOB.**

(Deloitte)



Just as brands meticulously map out the customer experience, employers must realise the importance of a seamless employee experience, look at it from both a personal and professional perspective, and listen to their workforce.

OVERCOMING HURDLES AND ROADBLOCKS

Of course, building a differentiated employee experience doesn't come without its fair share of challenges. The barriers facing organisations of all shapes and sizes include resource, perceived cost, and conflict with other business priorities.

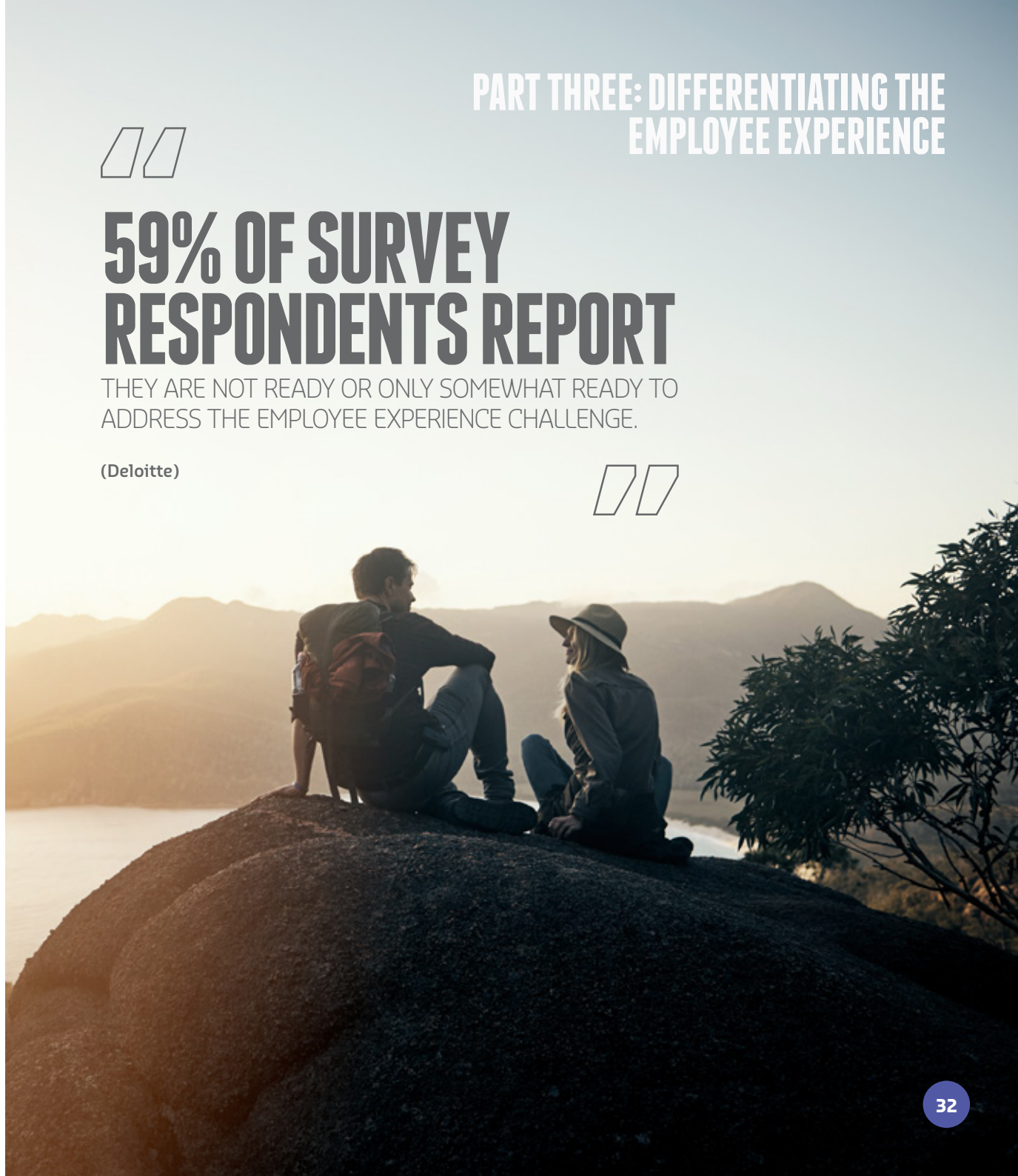
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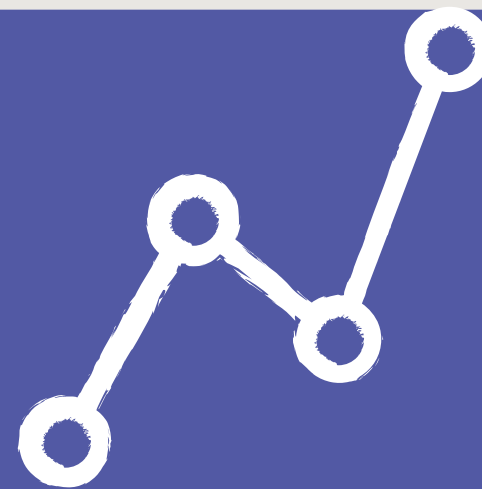


59% OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS REPORT

THEY ARE NOT READY OR ONLY SOMEWHAT READY TO
ADDRESS THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE CHALLENGE.

(Deloitte)





This isn't a fluffy employment scheme. It's an organisational shake up. It's an examination of everything the business does for its workforce, how it can improve, and what measurables need to be in place in order to gauge success.

Let's explore some of the key challenges...

IT'S BECOME AN AFTERTHOUGHT

For many, the employee experience is not yet a central strategy, which is troubling as it means that most HR leaders aren't being given the support they need and it fast falls down the agenda.

People are often quick to pass the buck too. Engagement needs to become a specific, measured objective that people across the business are made accountable for.

THERE'S LITTLE INVESTMENT

Organisations are underprepared and often unwilling to invest in the employee experience because not only is it costly, but it can also upset the status quo. It causes employers to ask awkward questions and ruffle feathers.

It takes a bit of time to get the wheels moving, but senior teams can begin to drive positive change by giving it suitable air time at board level and starting with small changes.

“IF YOU DON'T HAVE ADVOCATES IN THE LEADERSHIP TEAM, PERMEATING RIGHT THROUGH THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE BUSINESS, THEN IT BECOMES VERY DIFFICULT TO EMBED ANY KIND OF SOLUTION OR PROGRAMME WITHIN THE ORGANISATION OR THE ORGANISATION'S CULTURE.”

(Jonathan Bedford, Sodexo UK)

OLD SCHOOL DOESN'T WORK

HR and management teams are using outdated tools and approaches to affect and measure modern engagement strategies. It's important to not get stuck in the past. To stay relevant, companies should look to constantly revise the why and how behind the tools they're using.

Pulse survey tools bring ongoing employee feedback. Project management software streamlines collaborative tasks. Digital recognition programmes help us to celebrate and reward employees, all the while benchmarking engagement.

MISCOMMUNICATION

It's simple. If the employee experience is communicated in an ambiguous way, it becomes muddled. Employees are likely to misinterpret the mission and values of the organisation, and feel disconnected from the message and/or whatever's being asked of them.

Everyone is different, so communications should be tailored for individual teams and employees. Managers, in particular, need to hone their key messages and deliver them to the workforce in engaging ways.

WHAT EMPLOYEES NEED: THE ‘ESSENCE OF MEANING’

“PEOPLE ARE DRIVEN BY AUTONOMY, MASTERY AND PURPOSE.”

(Daniel Pink)

Professor of Psychology and Behavioural Economics Dan Ariely says there is a “naive and simplistic intuition that people are like rats in a maze that only care about money”.

Any employer who assumes this to be true will never truly engage their workforce, because above all else, it's meaning – not money – that humans crave the most. Without reason to do something, it becomes extremely difficult to motivate ourselves to do it.



**CASH REWARDS CAN ACTUALLY
COMMODITIZE AND DEVALUE OUR
ACHIEVEMENTS. PEOPLE CAN LOSE
THEIR SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT
WHEN LED TO BELIEVE THEY ONLY
DID SOMETHING FOR MONETARY GAIN.
IT CAN DEMOTIVATE US.**

(Fenja Ziegler, University of Lincoln)



Ariely continues “...most employers understand the importance of meaning, but not the weight or magnitude behind it”. Employees care about their achievements. The fruits of our labour are important to us and so is the public recognition it brings.

This is often explained as the ‘IKEA Effect’. A sofa is a sofa, but if we have to assemble it ourselves the end result means more to us. We value our own work far more than anything else – because it is connected to us.



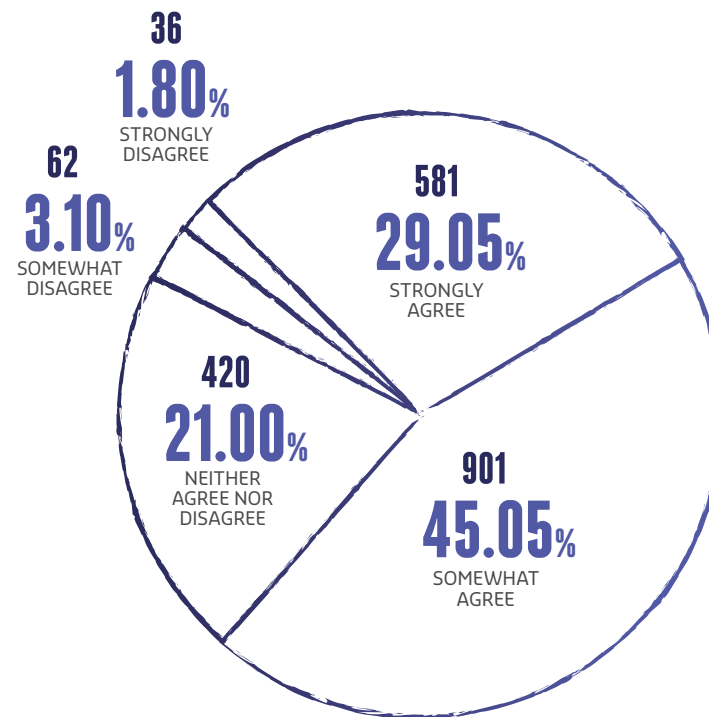
MORE THAN A QUARTER (26%) OF ALL EMPLOYEES DON'T FEEL THEY ARE MAKING A MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTION TO THE SUCCESS OF THEIR ORGANISATION.



(Move, Mould Motivate: UK Employee Engagement Survey 2017)

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT?

I MAKE A MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTION TOWARD THE SUCCESS OF MY ORGANISATION.



This reasoning aligns with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which asserts that beyond safety and belonging, humans seek esteem (confidence, achievement, respect) and self-actualisation (creativity, problem solving, spontaneity).

These motivation factors are important contributors to employee engagement and, as Ariely explains, come in a variety of forms including creation, challenge, ownership, identity and pride.

"INDIVIDUALS CRAVE WORK THAT LETS THEM LEAVE A UNIQUE FINGERPRINT ON THE BUSINESS."

(Dan Ariely)

This is what meaningful work provides us with. Emotional reasoning and deep connection to our organisation. Employees who feel like they are simply going through the motions – performing cyclical, menial, futile tasks with no end result – will likely become disillusioned in their role.

PART THREE: DIFFERENTIATING THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

WHAT EMPLOYEES NEED: 4 MORE ENGAGEMENT ESSENTIALS

It's an important one, but meaning is just one part of an irresistible employee experience. According to Deloitte there are four more elements...

01 HANDS-ON MANAGEMENT

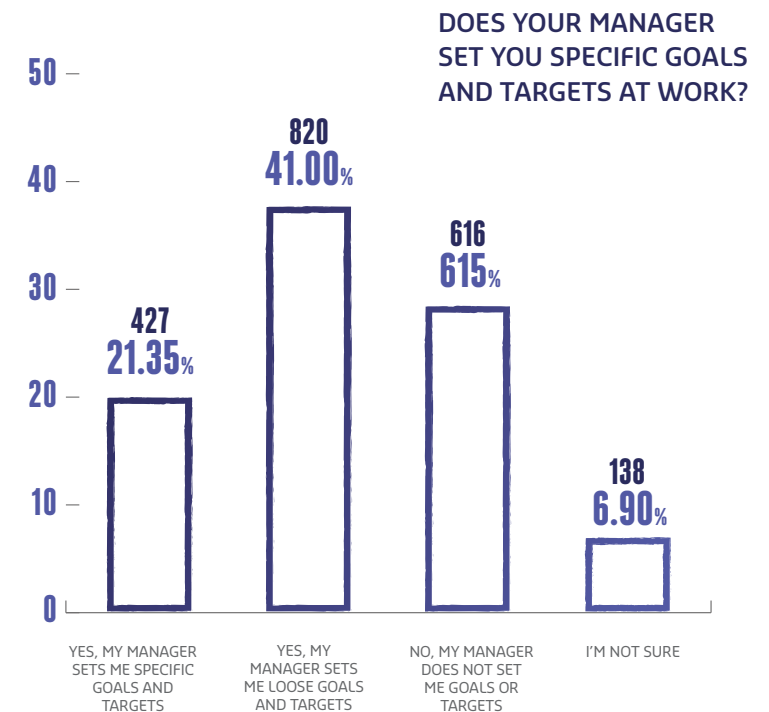
Research by Deloitte suggests only 51% of companies even attempt to develop aligned goals and, among those, only 6% revisit them frequently.

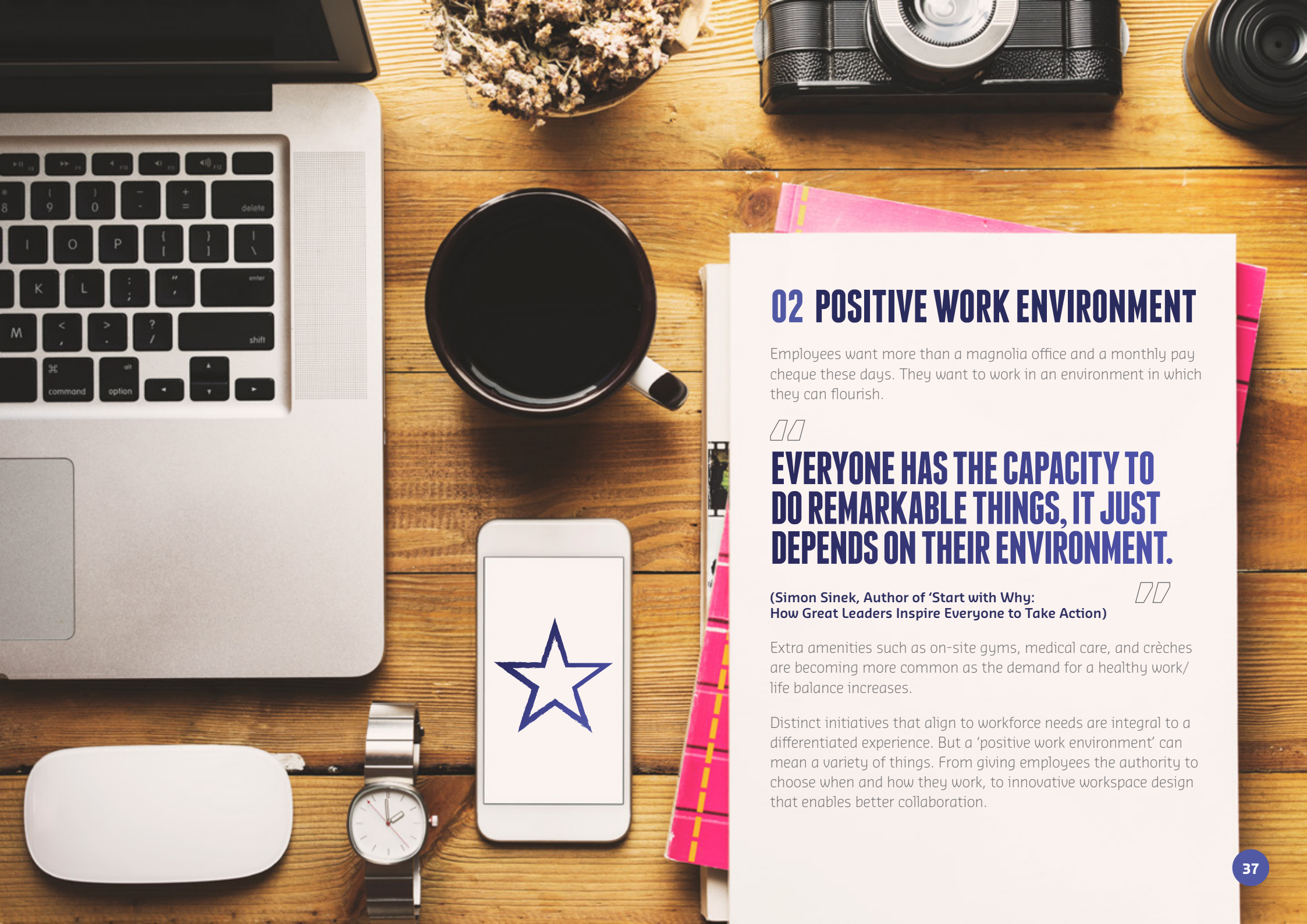
▯▯ AMONG EMPLOYEES WHO STRONGLY AGREE THAT THEIR MANAGER HELPS THEM SET PERFORMANCE GOALS, **69%** ARE ENGAGED. ▯▯

(Gallup)

By combining simple, agile goals with transparent and consistent feedback, employers can boost performance and overall engagement in a measurable way. But when only 21% say they are set 'specific' goals and targets (Move, Mould Motivate: UK Employee Engagement Survey 2017), there's a clear gap in expectation and execution.

Organisations must invest more in their managers and rethink the traditional appraisal system.





02 POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Employees want more than a magnolia office and a monthly pay cheque these days. They want to work in an environment in which they can flourish.



EVERYONE HAS THE CAPACITY TO DO REMARKABLE THINGS, IT JUST DEPENDS ON THEIR ENVIRONMENT.

(Simon Sinek, Author of 'Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action')



Extra amenities such as on-site gyms, medical care, and crèches are becoming more common as the demand for a healthy work/life balance increases.

Distinct initiatives that align to workforce needs are integral to a differentiated experience. But a 'positive work environment' can mean a variety of things. From giving employees the authority to choose when and how they work, to innovative workspace design that enables better collaboration.



**RETHINKING THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT
REQUIRES EMPLOYERS TO GO BACK TO THE
DRAWING BOARD AND ASK “WHO ARE WE? WHAT
DO WE DO? HOW CAN WE IMPROVE THE WAY WE
DO THINGS?” THIS IS ABOUT CREATING SOMETHING
THAT MAKES PEOPLE SAY “WOW”**

(James Malia, Sodexo UK)



03 GROWTH OPPORTUNITY

It's not news that young people put learning, development and progression high among their top motivators. But that doesn't mean all employers are creating the right opportunities for their employees.

Young, ambitious professionals are everywhere. Hungry to learn, develop new and existing skillsets, and climb the ladder – they're not prepared to stick around for long if they do not see themselves progressing.

For employers looking to hold onto their talent, this doesn't mean micro-managing. It means organising relevant training and empowering employees to learn for themselves.



MILLENNIALS ARE DRIVEN BY HOW SUPPORTED AND APPRECIATED THEY FEEL, AND HOW MUCH POSSIBILITY THEY HAVE.

(Anna Donovan, PWC)





**ORGANISATIONS WITH A STRONG
LEARNING CULTURE HAVE 30-
50% HIGHER ENGAGEMENT AND
RETENTION RATES.**

(David Mallon)



04 TRUST IN LEADERSHIP

Managers must become better leaders. Dynamism and empathy will help motivate and inspire their workforce. But first and foremost it's honesty and transparency they need to demonstrate.

Fall at this hurdle and all respect is lost.

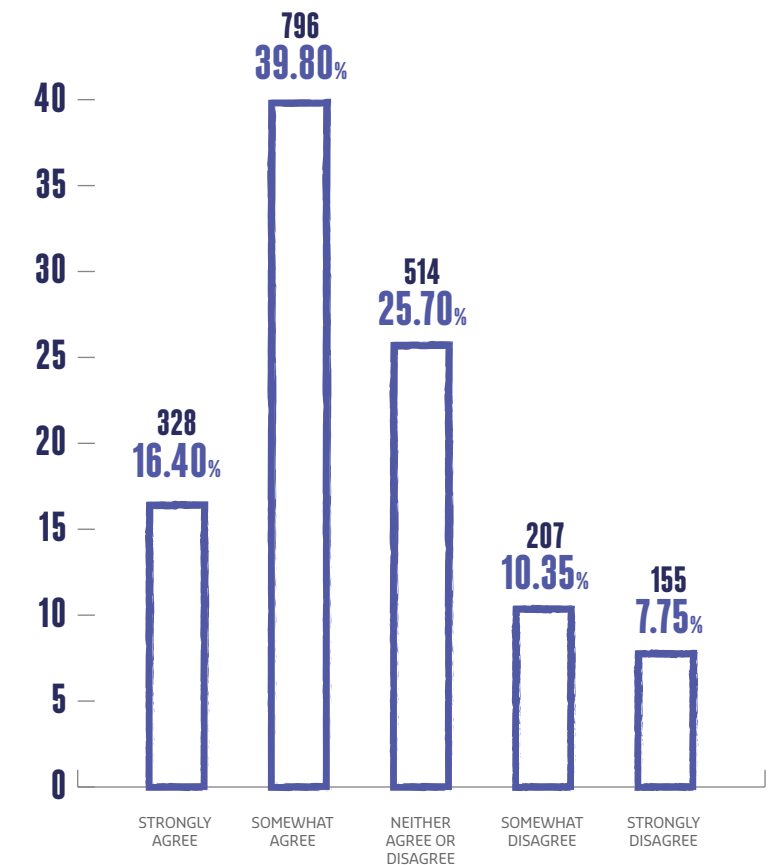
83% OF EMPLOYEES EXPERIENCED A MORE POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT WHEN THEY FELT THERE WAS TRUST IN THEIR MANAGERS/ORGANISATION

(IBM)

PART THREE: DIFFERENTIATING THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT?

I TRUST MY MANAGERS AND SENIOR MANAGER TO MAKE THE RIGHT DECISIONS AND TREAT ME FAIRLY.



Trust is a hard-earned thing – it takes time. Leaders are judged by their everyday decisions, their treatment of employees and their ability to build meaningful relationships with employees, and communicate effectively.

For an organisation's engagement strategy to have its desired impact, line managers need to learn new skills and get a grip on what it means to be a role model, a mentor and coach...

ONLY 17% OF EMPLOYEES 'STRONGLY AGREE' THAT THEY TRUST THEIR LINE MANAGER TO TREAT THEM FAIRLY AND MAKE THE RIGHT DECISIONS.

(Move, Mould Motivate: UK Employee Engagement Survey 2017)

PART FOUR: THE UNDENIABLE IMPORTANCE OF MANAGEMENT

UNDER-TRAINED AND UNINSPIRING

“Many line managers today do not understand what it takes to engage their employees,” says Iain Thomson. “Far too often we see people handed these roles based on their current skillset. The thinking being: if you’re good at your job, you get ‘made the manager’. But the reality is that effective management requires a specific skillset that doesn’t always come naturally”...

You may have heard of the phrase ‘People leave managers, not companies’. It’s true. The ongoing relationship between line managers and employees is vital.

These are the people employed to motivate and inspire the workforce. They are in constant communication with employees, the first point of call, and the individuals responsible for training and developing talent within the organisation.

“THE SINGLE BIGGEST DECISION YOU MAKE IN YOUR JOB – BIGGER THAN ALL THE REST – IS WHO YOU NAME MANAGER. WHEN YOU NAME THE WRONG PERSON MANAGER, NOTHING FIXES THAT BAD DECISION. NOT COMPENSATION, NOT BENEFITS – NOTHING.”

(Jim Clifton, CEO, Gallup)

Senior leadership’s ability to find and hire the right individuals for these oh-so important roles is just as important. Choosing candidates who lack the fundamental know-how and people management skills to spur engagement is a big mistake to make.



MANAGERS ACCOUNT FOR 70% OF VARIANCE IN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SCORES.

(Harvard Business Review)



The role of a manager is complex and demanding. Employees don't respond well to the traditional authoritarian approach anymore, as Gallup's Jim Clifton explains, "The role of an old-style boss is command and control. Millennials care about having managers who can coach them, who value them as both people and employees, and who help them understand and build their strengths."

**80% OF THOSE
DISSATISFIED WITH THEIR
MANAGERS ARE ALSO
DISENGAGED FROM THEIR
EMPLOYERS.**

(Dale Carnegie, Author of *How to Win Friends and Influence People*)

We know there's a defunct relationship between most managers and their teams. Employees demand real leaders. People who'll light the way, advocate a culture of constant learning and give them everything they require to do an exceptional job.



A LEADER'S JOB IS NOT TO DO THE WORK FOR OTHERS,

IT'S TO HELP OTHERS FIGURE OUT HOW TO DO
IT THEMSELVES, TO GET THINGS DONE, AND TO
SUCCEED BEYOND WHAT THEY THOUGHT POSSIBLE.

(Simon Sinek, Author of *'Start with Why: How Great Leaders
Inspire Everyone to Take Action'*)



HOW TO MANAGE MANAGERS

It might seem ironic, but managers need to be managed. Just like every other employee, behind the job title are idiosyncratic individuals who require training and emotional engagement.

▯▯ EMPLOYEES WHO ARE SUPERVISED BY HIGHLY ENGAGED MANAGERS ARE 59% MORE LIKELY TO BE ENGAGED.▯▯

(Gallup)



People learn how to lead from their bosses. It's absolutely essential that C-Suite executives, and other prominent senior team members, grasp the gauntlet in making certain their managers understand how to fulfill their role effectively.

Professor of Management at Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business, Sydney Finkelstein, is quick to point out that "in some ways, managing managers is similar to managing anyone else – you need to align their goals with yours, provide feedback, and help them advance their careers".

But managers also need to learn how to become leaders.



PEOPLE MANAGERS OR TEAMS LEADERS ARE DEFINED BY THE FACT THAT THEY ACHIEVE RESULTS THROUGH OTHERS.

SO THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL THING FOR THEM TO NAIL IS TO SUPPORT THEIR PEOPLE TO DO THE BEST THEY CAN.

Jonny Gifford, Senior Advisor, Organisational Behaviour at CIPD



Employers can enable managers to develop skill through training, courses and conferences outside of the immediate work environment. But ultimately, it's their presence and ongoing guidance that has (by far) the biggest impact.

In our recent eBook *Boost the Best Behaviours: The Ultimate Guide*, former England Rugby captain, and Sodexo Ambassador, Matt Dawson outlined some key principles that are important to remember when training managers to become leaders...

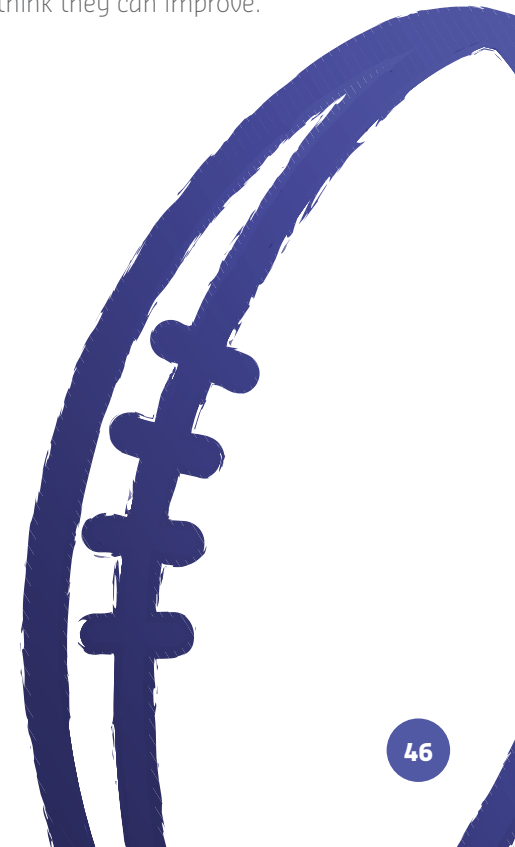
"Creating a positive business culture starts with humility and being ready to learn from anyone and everyone."


This is all about leading by example – or walking the talk – and can be applied to practically anything you do while managing your managers. If you want them to do something in a certain way, make sure you're doing it that way too.

No-one's perfect, so ask your managers for feedback on what they think about your training. This allows for an open and honest relationship, and creates a more effective management training experience. You never know, they might have some priceless suggestions.

"Take time out to understand what makes people tick. It creates more empathy around the relationships, and that gives you faith and trust from the people around you."

Take some time out to get acquainted with what managers are doing day-to-day and put the onus on coaching. Observe them, get to know them for who they are, and show them you're there to help, not scrutinise. Ask them how they're doing and how they think they can improve.



A group of people are high-fiving outdoors at sunset. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light from the low sun, creating a lens flare effect. In the foreground, a man with a beard and sunglasses is smiling and high-fiving. Behind him, several women are also smiling and participating in the high-five. The background shows a cityscape with buildings and colorful flags strung across the scene.

Get a fresh understanding by talking to their team and bring some context to your coaching. By getting to know who it is they're managing you can better advise them on how to motivate their people and develop their approach.

"If a culture is forced upon you and it is not something you truly believe in, it will be very difficult to drive that culture because you don't feel like you own it."

People don't tend to respond well to micro-managing. If you want your manager to feel engaged and driven in what they're doing, offer them guidance, take a step back, give them the freedom to develop their own identity as a manager. Don't dictate exactly how they should manage.

Managers who receive verbal slaps on the wrist in front of the team lose face and authority. If you need to criticise them, for whatever reason, do it in private and clearly explain what they've done wrong. On the flip side, be sure to praise them in public when it's deserved.

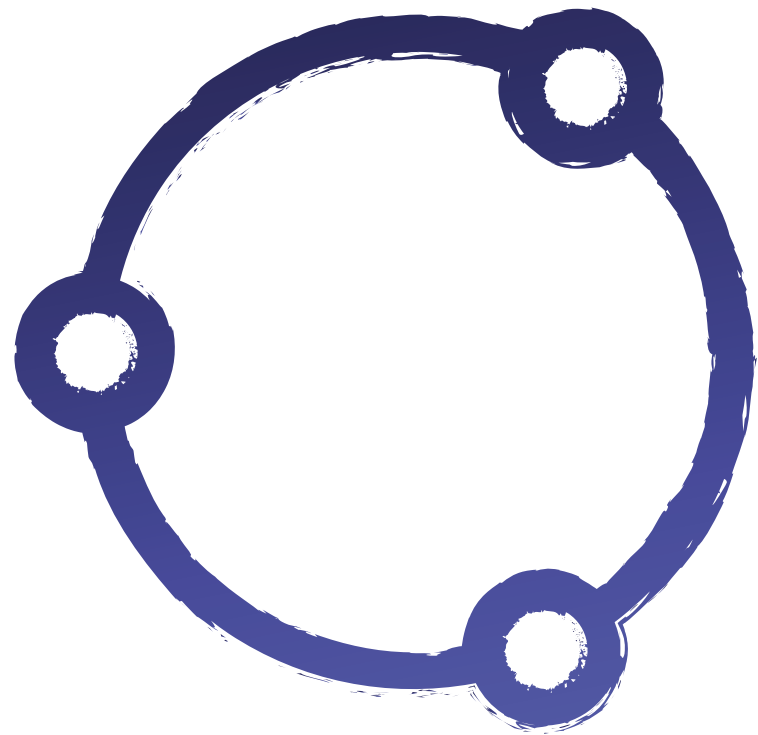
MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR BETTER EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

In the pursuit of employee engagement it's often easy to overthink the basics. Principal and Founder of Bersin by Deloitte, Josh Bersin, believes we need to "keep it simple" for line managers looking for a better approach...

- Are people in the right roles?
- Are they getting the support they need?
- Do they know what's expected of them?
- Do they have clarity on where to focus?
- Are you talking with them regularly?
- Do they feel a sense of teamwork?

These are all simple questions that form the bedrock of a solid people management strategy. From here managers can refine their messages and shape the way they approach each and every employee's individual needs at the coal face.

Where problems run awry is when essential management practices go neglected...



MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATION

Keeping a constant, open line of communication is fundamental. The employee-employer relationship either thrives or dies on management's ability to communicate effectively.

17% OF PEOPLE OF SAY THE FEEDBACK THEY RECEIVE FROM MANAGERS IS MEANINGFUL.

(Gallup)

Research from Gallup found that “employees whose managers hold regular meetings with them are almost three times more likely to be engaged”.

It's no coincidence. Managers must maintain an ongoing dialogue around performance, company culture, and the tasks and projects their teams are involved in - all the while aligning these discussions with the vision of the company.



COMMUNICATION NEEDS TO BE PERSONAL.

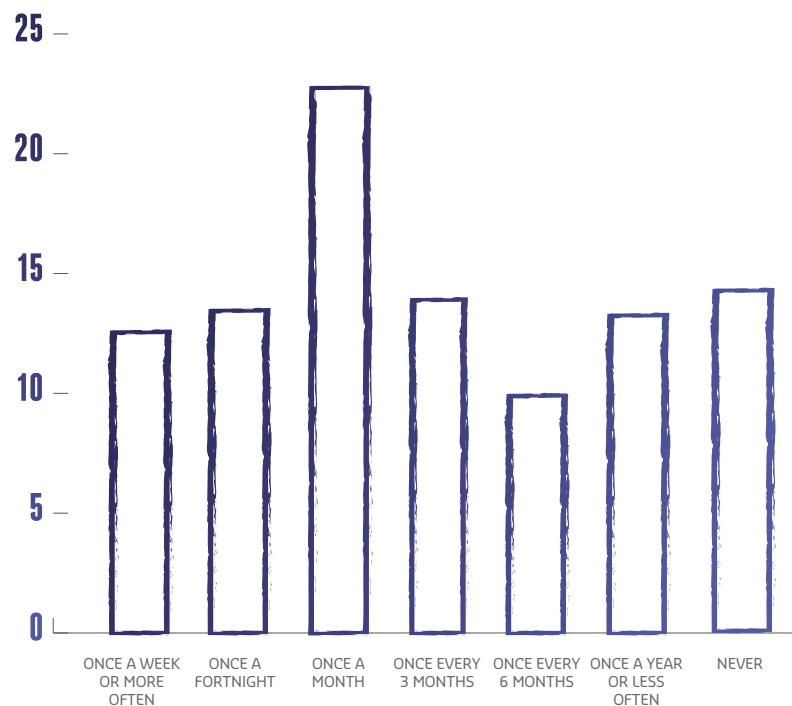
HUMANS ARE SOCIAL BEINGS AND WE PUT REAL ONUS ON FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTIONS. MANAGERS SHOULD BE PREPARED TO ORGANISE REGULAR ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS WITH EMPLOYEES, AS WELL AS TEAM MEETINGS WHERE TRANSPARENCY IS THE PRIORITY.

James Malia, Sodexo UK



Feedback is a huge part of this, as Gallup's Jim Clifton explains, "...the way millennials communicate (texting, tweeting, Skype, etc) is now real-time and continuous. This dramatically affects the workplace because they are accustomed to constant communication and feedback."

But when the Move, Mould Motivate: UK Employee Engagement Survey 2017 revealed that 51% of employees still have four or less one-to-ones with their manager per year, it's clear that managers are underestimating, or simply ignoring this demand.



PART FOUR: THE UNDENIABLE IMPORTANCE OF MANAGEMENT

LEADERSHIP IS A WAY OF THINKING, A WAY OF ACTING AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, A WAY OF COMMUNICATING.

(Simon Sinek, Author of 'Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action')

Employees yearn for regular, honest discussions about their progression, their role in the company, and how they can improve. Managers who deliver this will help to create the free-flowing, supportive, tolerant environment needed to inspire engagement.

Keep it human to human.



FOCUS ON STRENGTHS

A 2002 study, from Harter and Schmidt, found that workplaces with a higher percentage of employees, who indicate they “have the opportunity to do what they do best every day”, are 38% more productive, and see a 44% increase in employee retention.

This doesn't mean managers should sweep employee weaknesses under the rug. But in understanding how best to leverage their employees abilities, and encouraging them to develop their strengths into outstanding skills, managers can build an engaged and talented team.



THE BEST EMPLOYEES DON'T WANT TO BE CODDLED; THEY WANT TO MATTER. THEY WANT TO BE PART OF SOMETHING GREATER THAN THEMSELVES, AND THEY WANT TO KNOW HOW THEY CONTRIBUTE TO THAT SOMETHING.



(Brian Brim and Jim Asplund)

We know people long for meaningful work – and only when employees feel valued do they become engaged in their roles. They need freedom to apply their strengths in their work to feel utilised within the organisation.

It's no wonder then that Gallup report '61% of employees in teams led by managers who focus on strengths are engaged'. It makes perfect sense.



**78% OF EMPLOYEES FEEL THEY ARE
MAKING A DIFFERENCE AND APPRECIATED
WHEN MANAGERS FOCUS ON THEIR
STRENGTHS OVER THEIR WEAKNESSES.**

(The VIA Institute on Character)

For the employee this inspires a new-found belief and trust in their seniors. It instills confidence in people, and encourages the creativity and engagement necessary for business growth.



A group of six diverse young adults (three women and three men) are running and laughing joyfully in a park. They are dressed in casual, trendy clothing like jeans, t-shirts, and jackets. The background shows green trees and a cloudy sky. The overall mood is energetic and positive.

NURTURE TEAMS AND MICRO-COMMUNITIES

“Observing herd behaviour and ‘social norms’ shows us just how influential our peers can be on the way we behave,” says Fenja Ziegler. “Powerful and primal, the desire to follow the crowd and fit into what you perceive as normal behaviour can have both positive and negative repercussions.”

This can prove dangerous in some scenarios, as one disengaged employee can disrupt a whole team. However, it also represents an opportunity for managers to create highly-fused and collaborative teams that fulfil their potential.

“AS LONG AS INDIVIDUALS ARE AWARE OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE OF THEIR TEAM IN THE BROADER BUSINESS, THEIR ROLE WITHIN IT AND THE IMPACT THEY ARE HAVING, THEY SHOULD BE GIVEN THE FREEDOM TO BOUNCE OFF EACH OTHER. **WE NEED TO ENABLE CREATIVITY AND AUTONOMY WITHIN SMALLER TEAMS** IF WE WANT TO NURTURE THEIR ENGAGEMENT.”

(James Malia, Sodexo UK)

Conflict resolution, job delegation, and recognition are key skills that drive effective engagement. This is about understanding both individual and team needs.



97% OF EMPLOYEES AND EXECUTIVES BELIEVE A LACK OF ALIGNMENT WITHIN A TEAM DIRECTLY IMPACTS THE OUTCOME OF A TASK OR PROJECT.

“Within the wider business community, smaller micro-communities naturally develop, and with it teams of people, who collaborate with each other every day.” says James Malia.

People grow comfortable in their environment and become familiar with those around them. Introducing the wrong type of person can unsettle things. Which is why, when recruiting and onboarding employees to these micro-communities, managers must consider their personality, their work-style, and the impact they’re going to have.

As Malia explains, “Interviews these days are focusing less on what people’s skills are – although this is obviously important. What employers are now looking at is actually, whether they think the person be a good fit for this business. Would they be a good fit for our culture? Would they fit into that team?”



PART FIVE: BECOMING THE 'EMPLOYER OF CHOICE'

START BY LISTENING

"The professional climate is changing" says Iain Thomson. "We're seeing the pendulum swing back in the favour of the employee. It's now down to employers to create something exceptional – culture, talent management, and engagement are all a part of this. Becoming the 'employer of choice' will be the biggest boardroom conundrum over the next decade."

It all starts with listening. Lifting up the bonnet and finding out exactly what's going on.



GOOD LISTENERS HAVE A HUGE ADVANTAGE. FOR ONE, WHEN THEY ENGAGE IN CONVERSATION, THEY MAKE PEOPLE 'FEEL' HEARD. THEY 'FEEL' THAT SOMEONE REALLY UNDERSTANDS THEIR WANTS, NEEDS AND DESIRES. AND FOR GOOD REASON; A GOOD LISTENER DOES CARE TO UNDERSTAND.

(Simon Sinek)



EFFECTIVE LISTENING STRATEGIES

01 PULSE SURVEYS

Pulse surveys are the natural successor to traditional annual surveys. Anonymous or not, they enjoy high response rates, allow employers to monitor real-time employee feedback, and help to gauge key engagement KPIs such as advocacy.

Meaning organisations can make better informed decisions and nurture a culture of transparency and continuous improvement.

02 FEEDBACK PLATFORMS/ SUGGESTION BOXES

Give employees a greater voice by creating a dedicated space where they can air their qualms, queries, suggestions and concerns. Online feedback platforms or physical suggestion boxes can both prove effective in this sense.

This may seem old school, but it lets people know their feedback is welcome at any time and encourages engagement with key subjects.

03 ONGOING FACE-TO-FACE FEEDBACK

Simple, human and immediate. Employers can use employee performance reviews and team meetings as an opportunity to get honest, face-to-face feedback. Leavers should also have a say on the matter. Why are they leaving? How could the company have supported them better?

But it's up to managers to ensure employees feel comfortable and ready to share.

As James Malia explains, "If everyone sits there feeling a bit timid – scared to stick their head above the pulpit – you're never going to get anywhere. Your employees and their ideas are just as important as anyone else's in the business. Remove that sense of impending doom."



EMPLOYEES WANT AN EFFECTIVE VOICE WITHIN THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP.

IT'S A NATURAL, HUMAN THING FOR US
TO WANT OUR VOICE TO BE HEARD. IT
ALSO MEANS WE HAVE SOME DEGREE OF
SELF-DETERMINATION OR INFLUENCE IN
OUR WORKING LIVES.

(Jonny Gifford, CIPD)



BE INSPIRATIONAL

Employees expect a lot of things from their employers. It's what they don't see coming that impacts them most, hits them in the gut and drives emotion.

It's the unexpected which jolts people from their tired perceptions. Unique benefits and personalised rewards have the power to position an organisation as a desirable, thoughtful employer, and create the remarkable moments that inspire.

Think outside the box and give employees something positive to talk about.





PART FIVE: BECOMING THE 'EMPLOYER OF CHOICE'

▯▯ WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO DO IS OFFER SOMETHING THAT BENEFITS EVERY SINGLE ONE OF YOUR STAFF. TAILOR YOUR INITIATIVES TO THE IDIOSYNCRASIES OF YOUR WORKPLACE, AND MAKE IT SO THE PEOPLE WHO WORK WITHIN YOUR ORGANISATION ARE THE ENVY OF EVERYBODY. ▯▯

(James Malia, Sodexo)

- One International Licensing Agency realised that employees were struggling to get home at a reasonable time at the end of the week due to nightmare traffic. So the organisation decided instead to let everyone leave at 3pm on Fridays. This meant employees could avoid the added stress of rush hour and got more time spend to spend with their loved ones.
- Others have started offering 3 and 6 month sabbaticals to loyal employees, who want to take some time out from their manic professional lifestyle to travel the world, but also return to the company at the end of it.

This is about facilitating work-life balance and understanding that people have goals and dreams outside of their jobs.

- A UK manufacturing company scrapped their clock in/out system as it was creating queues that were forcing employees to arrive half an hour, and leave half an hour late each day. With the policy gone, the bonds between colleagues shone through. Everyone made sure they were on time to relieve the person they were replacing. It was nothing to do with the company, it was all to do with the team. They felt even more responsible to do right by their colleagues and trusted by their employer.
- And for an exemplary example there's no better place to look than Google. Their '20% time' initiative guarantees that employees get to spend one-fifth of their time to working on their own projects. This empowers them to become innovative thinkers and more focused in their roles.

Employers are often so busy fretting over processes and productivity that they neglect to see what's right in front of them. They over-complicate things when people just want simplicity.

It's a breath of fresh air in a hectic world.

RECOGNISE AND REWARD

According to Josh Bersin and Deloitte's research, "High recognition-culture organisations have 30% lower voluntary turnover than those who just 'push people to perform' without regular recognition. Social recognition and praise have a big role to play in employee engagement."

Employers need to take time and care to observe each individual's performance, ensure these motivational interactions take place on a daily basis, and give credit where credit's due.

We also need to keep it human, as James Malia explains:

"Don't blanket email your teams all the time, asking how they are. Yes, it's important to do that sometimes because it's a nice 'just thinking about you' – but it's impersonal. Pick up the phone, have a conversation with them. Better still, speak to them face-to-face..."

"Recognition should always be a personal thing. Employers who can't encapsulate this in their messaging, making it as human as possible, will only alienate their team."

Malia continues, "...it doesn't have to be a formal one-to-one every time, and can often just be an informal conversation. The danger is that contact between people can become far too automated. More regular, but less personal isn't the way it should be. People will suddenly see that they're no longer being treated as an individual, instead they're being treated as a cog in the company."

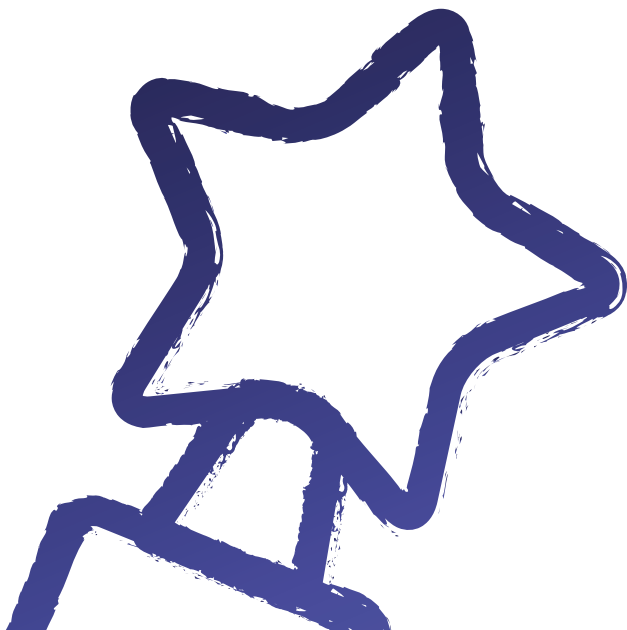
☐☐ WE LIVE IN A BUSY WORLD WHERE PEOPLE HAVE COME TO EXPECT A LOT OF THEMSELVES. ALL THEY REALLY WANT IS TO BE TOLD THEY'RE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS. RECOGNITION STIRS POSITIVE EMOTION IN US — AND MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, A SIMPLE THANK YOU IS MORE THAN ENOUGH. ☐☐

(Ian Hodson, Head of Reward, University of Lincoln)

One study from Dan Ariely found that "Ignoring the performance of people is almost as bad as shredding their effort before their eyes". However our research has revealed that 34% of employees do not feel recognised at all by their managers.

"Organisations need to create that habit of saying thank you," explains Iain Thomson. "If we fail to formalise it, those exceptional employee stories that go on in every company, everyday, get lost. Recognition programmes enable us to find and celebrate the stories that define our company culture and influence others to change their behaviour."

From public praise to a private 'well done', these small, but significant, social nods can make all the difference...

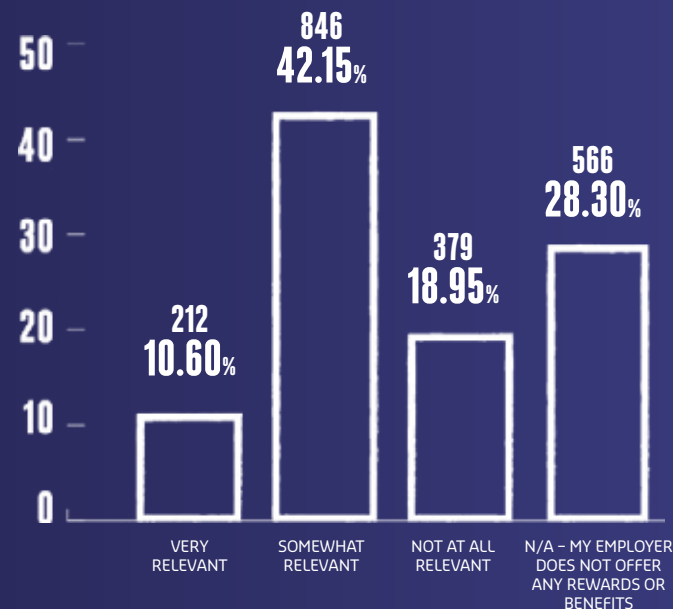


ENERGY AND PRAISE

ONLY 10% SAY THE REWARDS OFFERED TO THEM ARE 'VERY RELEVANT' TO THEIR LIFESTYLE AND PERSONAL INTERESTS.

(Move, Mould Motivate: UK Employee Engagement Survey 2017)

HOW RELEVANT ARE THE BENEFITS AND REWARDS YOUR EMPLOYER OFFERS TO YOUR LIFESTYLE AND PERSONAL INTERESTS?



When energy provider E.ON introduced their peer-to-peer recognition programme they swept away all hierarchical structure. 'Buzz' enables individuals and teams to be recognised for going above and beyond. Employees can search for their colleagues, align the activity to a company value and send a formal 'thank you'.

As a result, E.ON saw key engagement statistics increased by 8-18% in just 12 months — 13% more employees reported feeling 'valued and recognised' and understanding of the organisation's vision also rose by 18%.

Since 2014, more than 233,000 'thank you' messages have been sent.

Reward also has its place, but employers are having to become more innovative.

Traditional rewards e.g. good pay, good pensions, maternity leave etc, have joined the long list of what Frederick Herzberg defined as hygiene factors: the characteristics of a job that cannot raise levels of satisfaction, but whose absence can lead to job dissatisfaction.

Employees want rewards outside of this framework — and for people to feel motivated enough to want to earn them, they need to be relevant.



IF YOU CAN'T PROMOTE AN EMPLOYEE, THE NEXT BEST THING IS TO GIVE HIM OR HER A THOUGHTFUL, PERSONALISED REWARD THAT SENDS THE MESSAGE: WE RECOGNISE HOW WELL YOU'RE PERFORMING. YOU'RE GOING PLACES WITH THIS COMPANY.

(Jeremy Boudinet, Ambition)



High street and holiday discounts, affordable tech, childcare support, annual leave purchase, financial training, and wellbeing initiatives are all popular benefits. But unless they're properly aligned to the organisation and its employees, you're not maximising their impact.

THE MEASURE OF IT ALL

Organisations looking to become the 'employer of choice' must find tangible ways to measure engagement. Armed with employee feedback and data, senior teams, management and HR departments can begin to get a grip on what's working and what's not.



**47% OF ORGANIZATIONS PLAN TO,
OR CURRENTLY, MEASURE EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT MORE THAN ONCE ANNUALLY.**

(Modern Survey)



Effective measurement is the one and only way employers can determine and evaluate the atmosphere within the business.



MAKING SENSE OF EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK

Once employers have listened – really listened – they need to form meaningful interpretations from the communications they've received.

What are the biggest issues for employees? What is stopping them from doing their job effectively? Do they feel valued? Where is the company falling short?

Making sense of employee feedback and taking steps towards suitable solutions is how progress is made. This strategy puts employees at the centre of everything and ensures all decisions are made for the good of the workforce, as well as the bottom line.



THE ENGAGEMENT INDEX VARIES DEPENDING ON THE TYPE OF ORGANISATION. CHARITY, PUBLIC SECTOR, AND PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYEES ALL BECOME ENGAGED FOR DIFFERENT REASONS.

WHEN YOU'RE ASKING WHETHER YOUR EMPLOYEES ARE ENGAGED, YOU NEED TO START BY LOOKING AT THE TYPE OF BUSINESS YOU REALLY ARE AND THEN GO FROM THERE.

(Ian Hodson, University of Lincoln)



A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a red sticky note against a glass surface. Several other sticky notes in blue and yellow are already attached to the glass. The background is blurred, showing an office environment.

JUGGLING THE HARD FIGURES

By making small changes to day to day activity in the organisation and introducing initiatives based on employee suggestions and feedback, employers can begin to develop a more mature approach to employee engagement.

PART FIVE: BECOMING THE 'EMPLOYER OF CHOICE'



Monitoring key performance indicators e.g. productivity, employee turnover, and attendance over time will help to indicate whether these changes have made a difference, or whether it's time to go back to the drawing board.

Not everything will work. But employers can refine their core business strategy and build a culture that works for both the business and its people by understanding how to measure the success of their engagement efforts, and how to use data in the right way.

PART SIX: THE FUTURE OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

“Employers at the CEO level down have to realise that employees are your product,” says Josh Bersin. “If your people do not feel committed, engaged, and supported, no product or services strategy can succeed. Some companies truly get this, but many still do not.”

Organisations have a lot to learn. Employee engagement is an infantile concept that’s evolving and maturing, and so is our understanding of exactly how to go about it.

This is just the beginning for employers.

"We're going to see diversification across different markets and countries," says Iain Thomson, "Attracting and retaining top talent will be the biggest challenge because without humans we're stuck."

We're set to see more and more organisations battling to out-think and outmanoeuvre competitors in the race for talent. If you're not seen as the right company to work for in your field, you won't get the right people.

Here we explore two key trends dominating this thought space at the moment...

TECHNOLOGY WILL TRANSFORM US

Technology can't possibly replace the human relationships and emotional interaction that drives employee engagement. But as we move forward it will bring a new dimension to leadership.

BETTER EQUIPPED MANAGERS

Companies develop increasingly flexible working initiatives — similar to Virgin's work anywhere and unlimited leave policies — and seamless

communication, that goes beyond email, will become as much of a challenge as it is a priority.

Online tools like Slack and Skype already allow managers to communicate instantly with employees, and reach and inspire remote workers too. However, as the work environment becomes more remote, we're going to experience greater reliance on technology for one-to-ones, feedback, team meetings and catch-ups.

Technology has helped employers to broaden communication channels, but there's still a growing demand for more sophisticated tools and better utilisation by managers.



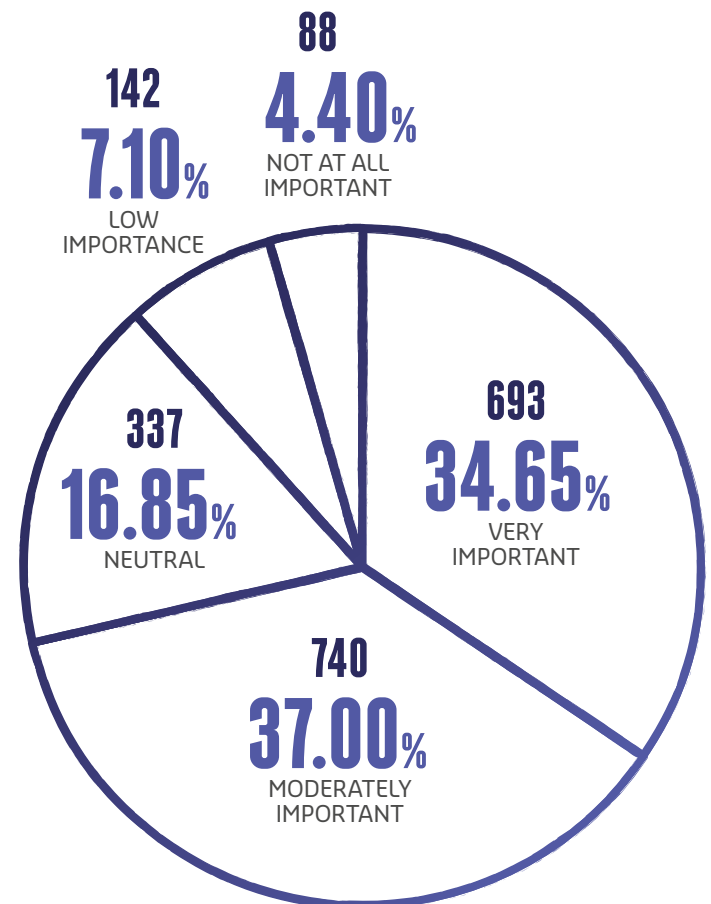
72% OF EMPLOYEES SAY THAT TECHNOLOGY IS IMPORTANT TO THEIR OVERALL PRODUCTIVITY IN THE WORKPLACE.



(Move, Mould Motivate: UK Employee Engagement Survey 2017)

"We will have more team management tools, AI will make tools more conversational and productive," predicts Josh Bersin. "People will work in "pods" and we will have lots of video and audio connections to others, and over time AI will help us "nudge" work to make it better."

HOW IMPORTANT WOULD YOU SAY TECHNOLOGY IS TO YOUR OVERALL PRODUCTIVITY IN THE WORKPLACE



BETTER EQUIPPED EMPLOYEES

We're also going to see more emphasis on employees' technology needs. From interactivity to storage, each role has different demands.

Iain Thomson believes "productivity and each individual's ability to do exceptional work is becoming more dependant on the tools they're provided with. From designers to data analysts, organisations have to adapt, invest in and supply their employees with the technology that best suits their needs."

Many organisations are still playing catch up, but there's no doubt that technology will be instrumental in expanding employee potential and accelerating business growth.



**LESS THAN HALF (46%) OF ALL EMPLOYEES
SAY THEIR EMPLOYER SUPPLIES THEM
WITH ALL THE TECHNOLOGY THEY NEED TO
DO THEIR JOB EFFECTIVELY.**



(Sodexo UK Employee Engagement Survey 2017)

WELL-BEING BECOMES A PRIORITY

Josh Bersin also sees there being a monumental change in the way we approach human performance management, nodding to a new look role for HR professionals where focus will shift to employee well-being.

According to CIPD, “well-being at work is not merely about managing a physical and cultural environment with the limited aim of not causing harm to employees. It requires organisations to actively assist people to maximise their physical and mental health”.

MINDFUL EMPLOYERS

Employers must strike a balance between the needs of the individual and the needs of the organisation. But also understand that personal health is more important than profit.

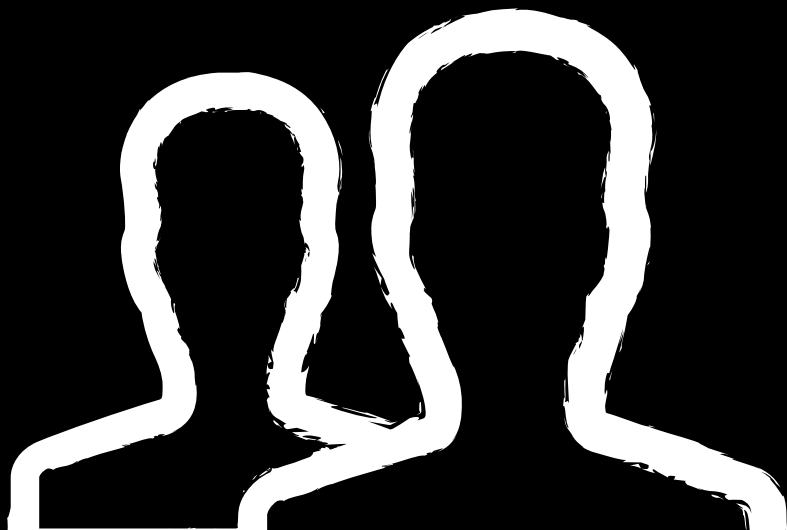
“There is a school of thought that divisions between our personal and professional lives have eroded. But I don’t think we should be looking at it this way,” argues Jonny Gifford. “Well-being in the workplace is important, and without that work-life balance it’s a real struggle”.

Benefits such as health schemes, medical care and gym memberships will all take precedence. But as mental health awareness continues to proliferate throughout the general population, and the stigma surrounding it lessens, it’s psychological well-being that will take centre stage.

“57% OF MILLENNIALS SAY THAT WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND WELL-BEING IN A JOB ARE “VERY IMPORTANT” TO THEM.”

(Gallup)

“Focus will move towards an integrated approach to workplace well-being based on acknowledgement of the individual and collective need for emotional support,” says Hub for the Heart’s Mindfulness Expert, Karuna.



INTRINSIC WELL-BEING

“We are seeing a promising shift away from ‘policy, policing and punishment’, and a move toward more progressive practices”, says Sodexo UK Chairman, John Sylvester.

UK organisations who establish employee well-being as a core business value and create a safe, benevolent work environment that aims to tackle stress, can become a global force.

“Mindfulness and holistic workplace wellbeing programmes will no longer be a box-ticking process”, says Karuna. “Employers will put greater onus on the principles of well-being and the practices that nurture it.”

When employees are at ease they are more creative and feel greater freedom to express their authentic talents and be themselves.



**WELL EMPLOYEES ARE PHYSICALLY AND
MENTALLY ABLE, WILLING TO CONTRIBUTE
IN THE WORKPLACE AND LIKELY TO BE
MORE ENGAGED AT WORK.**

(CIPD)



CONCLUSION: THINK BIG, START SMALL

Employee engagement is a fluid, open-ended buzzword that's open to interpretation. But the bare bones principles remain the same. .

People first need to understand the why. Employees look for meaning in their work and if employers can provide this, with a clear vision and values that hit home, there's real chance for progress.

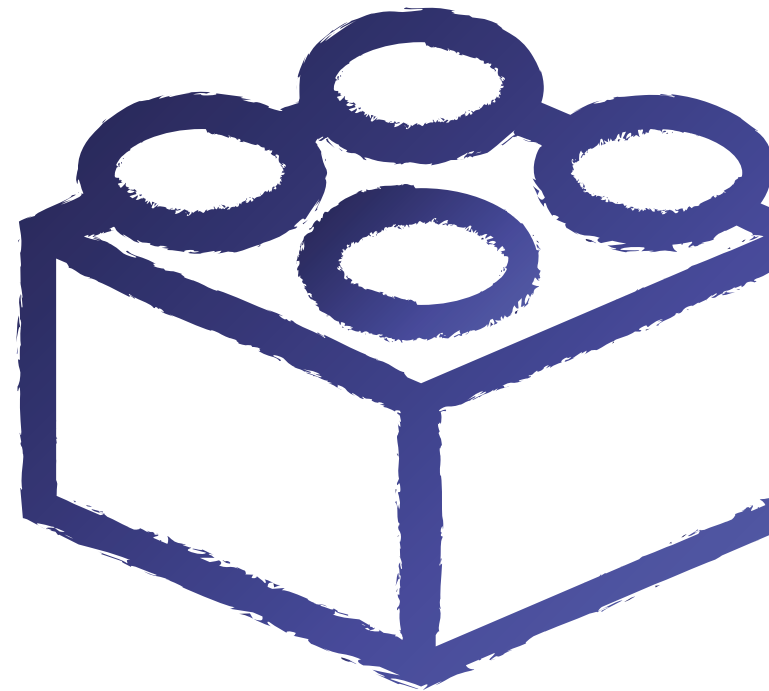
"If we want to influence people, we have to both educate them on the effects of their behaviour and motivate them in such a way that they become ready and willing to make that change," explains Iain Thomson. "This all boils down to effective communication and emotional empathy."

Employers have a duty of care towards their workforce: honesty, flexibility, motivation, communication and — above all else — empathy, are essential. If an organisation's leaders want to instill into their employees the passion, energy and commitment that comes from engagement, the workforce first has to believe in them and their mission.



IF YOU HIRE PEOPLE JUST BECAUSE THEY CAN DO A JOB, THEY'LL WORK FOR YOUR MONEY. BUT IF YOU HIRE PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE WHAT YOU BELIEVE, **THEY'LL WORK FOR YOU WITH BLOOD, SWEAT, AND TEARS.**

(Simon Sinek)



UNDERSTANDING THE INDIVIDUAL

Theory surrounding human nature hasn't changed all that much since the likes of Maslow and Herzberg first made steps towards explaining our behaviours. But the world has, and so have people's expectation of their leaders.

"It's extremely important that we don't categorise and stereotype people," says James Malia. "You wouldn't expect it outside of work, so why should it be acceptable in the workplace? Encourage and allow people to be themselves (however 'unique') and manage them as individuals."

Employers have to allow employees the freedom to create, achieve and thrive. But there's also a demand for ongoing recognition, and emotional support that should be given when it's needed.

Employees crave consistent, immediate acknowledgement for a job well done and are fast prepared to switch off and jump ship without it. They want a connected experience that provides them with growth opportunity, hands-on management, a positive workplace and meaning.

Organisations need to think big, but start small. Bring human touches to the day to day work environment. Focus on keeping communication clear and simple, give people the tools they need to succeed, say 'thank you' – and grow from there.

Engagement is complex, but in understanding and investing in the individual, organisations can move, mould and motivate their workforce and nurture significant change in the business.

GET IN TOUCH

Part of the Benefits and Rewards division, here in the UK we specialise in employee and consumer engagement, with over 50 years' heritage in creating award-winning experiences. From growing employee culture and inspiring success in workplaces, to driving consumer engagement with brands, we give businesses the tools to create lasting change through transforming behaviours, engagement and performance in people. We believe in bringing people and business together through creativity and excellent service, with our long-standing mission of improving the quality of life of everyone we work with.

Sodexo,
Avalon House, Breckland,
Linford Wood, Milton Keynes,
MK14 6LD

E: shine.engage.uk@sodexo.com

T: 0845 050 9532

W: www.sodexoengage.com

