

# 14 PROVEN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT HACKS TO TRY NOW

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Set your company apart with these engagement initiatives.



# INTRODUCTION

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It's no secret that an engaged employee is a productive employee, but how do you actually engage employees? In order to gain a competitive edge in today's talent race, innovative companies are implementing fun and unique ways to boost engagement and foster employee loyalty.

In this eBook, we'll take a look at the tactics used by some of the top companies to keep employees motivated every day. These companies have landed numerous "best place to work" awards and built up a reputation within their industries for prioritizing a more happy, engaged, and productive workforce.

**See what sets these businesses apart.**



# 1

# HUBSPOT

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Radical Transparency

HubSpot is widely known for having a great company culture that generates top performers. The inbound marketing software company published its [Culture Code](#) in 2013 as part manifesto and part employee handbook. Designed to stand the test of time, it explains who they are and who they aspire to be.

One of their primary goals is to maintain a “radically and remarkably” transparent culture. Transparency can improve communication, collaboration, and accountability, but Hubspot wanted to take that one step further. The radical transparency is intended to make each employee feel that they belong, they’re trusted, and they’re valued within the company.

Consider taking a page from HubSpot’s book and try implementing some of the following strategies to maintain a culture of transparency:

**Use Technology:** Utilize an internal office collaboration tool. HubSpot uses Wikis to discuss everything from financials to “HubSpot Lore & Mythology.”

**Share Everything You Can:** Only protect information when it is legally required or not yours to share.

**Try a New Layout:** Consider implementing an [open floor plan](#) to foster collaboration and communication between departments throughout the company.

**Change Up Seating:** Semi-random [seat shuffles](#) every three months ensures that employees meet new colleagues all the time and have an opportunity to feel like a part of the entire office.

# 2

# ZAPPOS

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No Mis-Hires

## ZAPPOS: NO MIS-HIRES

Zappos has received its fair share of awards for consistently fostering happy employees. So what makes Zappos, well, Zappos?

Aside from an employee-centered culture and dedication to providing the best customer experience, the massive online shoe and clothing shop is well-known for their “offer” to new hires. After four weeks of extensive training, Zappos offers to [pay new employees to quit](#). The offer is one month’s salary if a new worker decides that Zappos is not the right place for them.

Zappos wants to make sure its employees truly want to be there and that there is a mutual fit between the company and the employee. [Mis-hires](#) come with a high cost, and while most HR teams look to optimize the interview process, this Zappos strategy covers the margin of error for seemingly smart hires that are ultimately not a good fit.

*“We’re not looking for people who adore the company. We are looking for people who are invested in what we stand for, and in the work that we do.”*

**- Megan Petrini, Senior New Hire Trainer, Zappos**

**3**

# **RED FROG**

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**Paid Sabbatical**

## RED FROG: PAID SABBATICAL

*"I gained so much from my wanderlust that it only made sense to offer this benefit to my employees, my Frogs...This isn't a cocktail-umbrella-on-the-beach sort of trip. It's a push-yourself-outside-of-your-comfort-zone, culture-drenched, that just-changed-my-life trip. Those trips bring home game-changing ideas. Those are sabbaticals."*

**- Joe Reynolds, Founder, Red Frog Events**

Chicago-based [Red Frog Events](#) has received numerous "best place to work" awards, and it's no wonder why. Employees receive a top-tier benefits package that includes unlimited vacation days, free food and drinks, a \$100 allowance for office decorations, and best of all, a fully paid four-week sabbatical every five years. Joe Reynolds, the company's founder, is probably the [perk's biggest fan](#).





# 4

# DROPBOX

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Hack Week

## DROPBOX: HACK WEEK

Dropbox has created a modern interpretation of Google's renowned [20 percent time](#), which encourages employees to spend 20 percent of their time experimenting with their own ideas. The popular file-hosting company encourages creativity by holding a "[hack week](#)" for employees, giving them the opportunity to work on any side project that they want, with the possibility that the project could get launched.

While at first it may sound like lost time, teams can actually dream up more useful and creative solutions when they're allowed to choose their own projects. Not to mention, cross-departmental collaboration can help foster new relationships and give employees a refresher from their usual day-to-day routine. Consider allocating time for employees from all departments to focus on passion projects.



# 5

## PERCOLATE

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Genuine Peer Relationships



## PERCOLATE: PEER RELATIONSHIPS

In addition to [Percolate's](#) dog-friendly and open office, this award-winning marketing software company makes interpersonal workplace friendships top priority. But It's not just fun and games, according to a [report by Globoforce](#), employees with meaningful work friendships contribute to increased retention, engagement, and commitment to the company.

In an effort to develop genuine relationships among coworkers, Percolate organized [Clubs @ Percolate](#). From coffee to books, these clubs are intended to build camaraderie over non-work-related interests. Approved clubs must set a goal to reach, and when they accomplish it, they are eligible for a donation to the club's charity of choice at the end of the year. Clubs @ Percolate gives employees the opportunity to connect and build real relationships.



# 6

## ZURB

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### Collaborative Challenges

## ZURB: COLLABORATIVE CHALLENGES

[ZURB](#), an interaction design company, has a fun-loving culture that fosters happy and engaged employees. One of the ways they maintain their award-winning culture is with various weekly challenges during their [Friday15](#).

Friday15 allows employees to come together to solve a brief creative challenge in 15 minutes, such as an online scavenger hunt or the creation of a paper tower. These challenges have nothing to do with their everyday work, but instead they encourage [employee creativity](#). It just goes to show that all it takes is 15 minutes to help maintain a creative culture, encourage team building, and engage employees. Now that's one way to end the week.



**7**

# **HUFFINGTON POST**

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Nap Rooms

Sleep deprivation is no joke. In fact, according to the Virgin Pulse Institute, it's crippling employee productivity—76 percent of employees surveyed reported feeling tired most days of the week, and 15 percent have [dozed off during the day](#) at least once per week.

In an effort to combat sleepless nights and decreased productivity, [The Huffington Post](#) has created [nap rooms](#) where employees can go to recharge. Sure beats the old afternoon coffee!

*“Many were afraid their colleagues might think they were shirking their duties by taking a nap. We’ve made it very clear, however, that walking around drained and exhausted is what should be looked down on—not taking a break to rest and recharge.”*

**- Arianna Huffington, Editor-in-Chief, Huffington Post**



# 8

## METHOD

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Job Swap

## METHOD: JOB SWAP

**Method** is the creator of popular, naturally derived cleaning products, and they create engagement by encouraging employees to walk a day in another's shoes. Each employee is required to serve as the lobby receptionist one day each month. The **job swap** allows everyone to adopt a new perspective while spending time with customers, visitors, and employees they wouldn't otherwise see.

Creating a job swap or even a job shadow can give employees a better idea of the roles other employees play in the success of the organization. New relationships are formed and, more importantly, everyone develops empathy for the challenges coworkers handle on a daily basis.



# 9

## FRESH TILLED SOIL

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Workation

## FRESH TILLED SOIL: WORKATION

[Fresh Tilled Soil](#), the user interface web design company, wraps work and vacation all up into one neat perk known as a *workation*!

Employees who have met or exceeded goals are granted a workation during which they take a lighter workday in a beautiful, new environment. For instance, FTS has sent eligible employees to work (and play) in scenic, remote locations such as [Costa Rica](#) and the Dominican Republic. The idea is to create more work-life balance for employees while providing them with new cultural and creative perspectives to enrich their work.

While not all companies can afford to adopt the workation concept, work-life balance can be encouraged in a number of ways. For instance, allowing employees to work from home one day a month or ending the workday an hour early on Fridays are small ways to make big, positive impacts on your workforce.



# 10

## THE MOTLEY FOOL

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DIY Job Titles

Time and time again, [The Motley Fool](#), a multimedia financial services company, has been named one of the best mid-sized companies to work for. Their employee benefits seem endless, but one in particular stands out among the rest. At the Motley Fool, [employees choose their own job titles](#). That's right, any title goes.

The head of HR has decided to go by "Resources for Humans," but if you instead fancy "[Ingenious Engagement Guru](#)" it's all yours. The Motley Fool focuses on the work produced by employees rather than a title hierarchy. Not to mention, a little workplace fun doesn't hurt!

*"We figured out that the person who knows their current job role the best is, well, that person. And since we don't base compensation on a strict hierarchy of titles, why not let employees decide?"*

**- Kara Chambers, Employee Engager-er, The Motley Fool**

**11**

# **TUBEMOGUL**

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Feng Shui



## TUBEMOGUL: FENG SHUI

Recognized as one of the best places to work in the Bay Area, video advertising software company [TubeMogul](#) offers a number of unique perks ranging from regularly catered lunches to free shuttle transportation. Even more interesting, however, is their workspace feng shui.

The practice of feng shui is based on the idea that our environment is a mirror of what's happening inside of us. In other words, a messy office results in messy thoughts. To combat issues resulting from an unorganized office space, all TubeMogul offices are unique and trendy with open floor plans, airy ceilings, and lots of natural light.

Workplace clutter, poor lighting, excess noise, and wild temperatures send negative signals that impact employee behavior, so TubeMogul uses the office space to [foster positive thoughts](#) among employees.





# 12

# SPICEWORKS

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Company Mascot

## SPICEWORKS: COMPANY MASCOT

[Spiceworks](#) has been named Austin's Top Workplace five years and counting. They strive to make work more enjoyable with something to look forward to every day of the week, from Breakfast Taco Mondays to Friday Happy Hours. But what really sets them apart is who represents their company: SpiceRex.

[SpiceRex](#) is the company's very own mascot. The orange tyrannosaurus rex attends numerous events and conferences as a symbol of the fun-loving IT company, helping to "spread Spiceworks." It may sound silly at first, but SpiceRex is a great way to emphasize their employer brand, build connections with consumers, and humanize the company.



# 13

# SPONGECCELL

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Spongeweek

Do you have employees in multiple locations? [Spongecell](#), an award-winning advertising technology company, has a widespread workforce, yet they've built a great culture that's landed them among the best places to work. What's their secret?

Spongecell holds [Spongeweek](#)—a week-long event where employees from all offices come to the New York headquarters for face-to-face project work, team building, and good old-fashioned fun. The event is held once a year for the whole company and twice yearly for departments. Spongeweek includes activities like laser tag, intramural sports, and happy hours. But more importantly, Spongeweek allows employees to build relationships with coworkers from other offices.

*“Not only do employees love Spongeweek, but every time we do it, we net out with fantastic, tangible ideas for the business.”*

**- Kristin Ryan, HR Business Partner, Spongecell**

# 14

## THE BOUQS COMPANY

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Tell Us About Yourself

[The Bouqs Company](#), an online flower retailer, fosters employee relationships and builds a sense of community with their monthly employee “interviews.” These interviews occur during team meetings, where the CEO John Tabis selects one employee for a one-on-one interview.

These light-hearted Q&As consist of questions like, “Where did you grow up?” or “What was your ‘thing’ in high school?” They’re even accompanied by a slideshow of employee photos from childhood, high school, and beyond. These interviews are a fun way to learn employee stories and build deeper bonds within the team. Plus, they keep the focus on The Bouqs Company’s most important asset—its people.

*“I want folks to learn more about the people they work with—particularly things beyond the day-to-day job. These interviews give them a peek into their colleagues’ lives, helping them to better understand one another and form tighter bonds within and apart from the workplace. Not to mention, the baby pictures are epic!”*

**- John Tabis, CEO, The Bouqs Company**

# CONCLUSION

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Promoting a unique and exciting work culture helps employees connect emotionally to the company and its mission. Happy employees drive a healthier work environment and higher quality of work produced. A strong connection to the company leads to higher productivity and less attrition, so investing in engagement is actually the smartest move a business can make.

When your company is one people want to work for, recruiting and retention become exponentially easier. By adopting the outlook that inspired these great initiatives, your company will be in the position to keep employees engaged for the many years to come.

As your team grows, keep company culture together with an all-in-one HR platform employees will love. Learn more at [Namely.com](https://www.namely.com).