

# 7 Ways

TO ACHIEVE MEASURABLE INCREASES IN

# Engagement

AND IMPROVE RECRUITMENT, PERFORMANCE & RETENTION



Engage<sup>2</sup>Excel™

# What you can do to influence employee engagement at your company?

The facts about employee engagement are well established. Companies with highly engaged employees consistently outperform those without.

Much less clear, however, is what HR departments can do to influence engagement in a strategic manner.

This guide presents seven ideas to consider when building your company's employee engagement strategy.

**"There are only three measurements that tell you nearly everything you need to know about your organization's overall performance: employee engagement, customer satisfaction, and cash flow."**

– Jack Welch



# 1 Consider engagement from the employee's perspective

The first step in building your company's engagement strategy is to understand what motivates employees.

The book RESPECT, authored by engagement expert Jack Wiley, Ph.D., reveals what employees really want most from their employer, which is summarized by the acronym RESPECT—Recognition, Exciting Work, Security, Pay, Education & Career Growth, Conditions, and Truth.

After fair pay, which accounts for 25 percent of what employees want most, recognition is the next most critical item for employees, accounting for 20 percent.

Are you troubled by highly publicized reports about employee disengagement? Here's good news. Your employee's perceptions surrounding each of the seven enablers in the RESPECT framework are measurable and—most importantly—highly actionable.



# 2

## Define what employee engagement means to your company

Employee engagement drives value creation and competitive advantage across all industry sectors. In manufacturing, it is a critical enabler for improving innovation and quality control. In healthcare, it is fundamental to improving patient satisfaction. In service industries, employee engagement determines customer satisfaction levels.

If you believe that HR should take a proactive role in influencing engagement, your first step should be to adopt a definition that best suits your company's culture.

The definition offered here, by noted author and engagement expert Jack Wiley, identifies the willingness of an employee to apply discretionary effort as a key ingredient.

While many online definitions include terms like "passion" and "emotional commitment," you should include these in your definition only if they align with your company culture. "Discretionary effort" is an unambiguous term that focuses on the business value of improving employee engagement.

**"Employee engagement is the extent to which employees are motivated to contribute to organizational success and are willing to apply discretionary effort to accomplishing tasks important to the achievement of organizational goals."**

*– Strategic Employee Surveys, Jack Wiley, Ph.D.*



# 3

## Educate managers about engagement and their role in improving it

Managers and supervisors have a significant influence over employee engagement levels. However, many managers fail to grasp the extent to which engagement impacts their success. Others lack the skills needed to create environments in which employees feel appreciated and motivated.

Listed here are just a few of the variables influenced by employee engagement. What impact does “discretionary effort” have on your company?

Educating managers and supervisors about how engagement impacts their success and what they can do to more effectively engage employees is essential to the success of your company’s employee engagement strategy.



# 4

## Choose a survey partner that can help you translate insights into action

Each year, companies spend more than a billion dollars on engagement surveys. Yet nearly half do not act on the insights gained from these surveys.

While it's true that you can't manage what you don't measure, the process of soliciting input from employees can backfire if you are not prepared to act on it.

Whether you are launching an engagement survey for the first time or reexamining your approach to measuring engagement, the following questions will help you identify the survey partner best qualified to meet your company's needs.

### Questions to ask potential engagement survey partners:

- **How do you define "employee engagement"?** Look for a partner whose definition is closest to your own.
- **How will you help us interpret the survey results?** The ability to benchmark results and hone in on key drivers of both engagement and performance confidence are critical for success.
- **How can you help us translate survey results into insights that are actionable at the managerial level?** Look for solutions that provide prescriptive insights so that managers don't have to build their action plans from scratch.



# 5

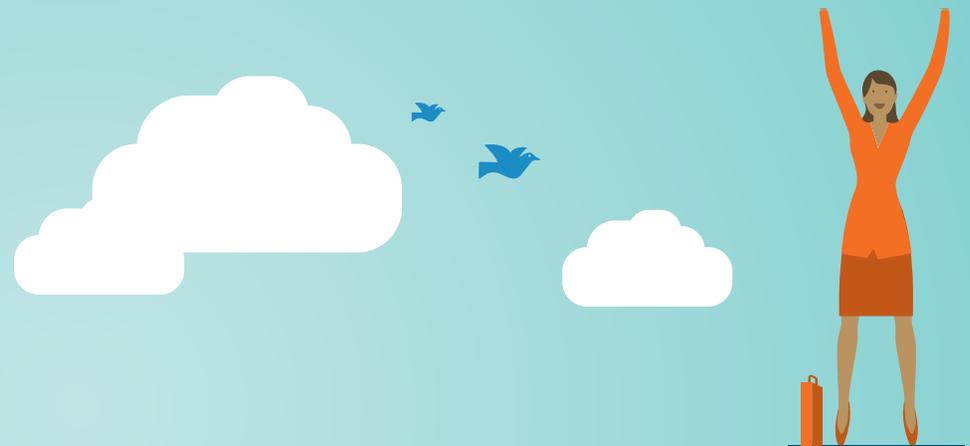
## Add performance-based recognition to achieve strategic enterprise objectives

Employee recognition is critical for influencing employee engagement. In fact, the number-one reason employees seek employment elsewhere is “lack of recognition.”<sup>1</sup>

Chances are, you are already recognizing employees for their years of service. Our research shows that companies with formal length of service programs enjoy engagement scores that are 25 points higher.<sup>2</sup>

Performance-based employee recognition programs are powerful tools for identifying, recognizing and rewarding behaviors tied to strategic business objectives.

What are your company’s key strategic initiatives? In building your engagement strategy, consider designing programs that recognize employees for successfully addressing the challenges deemed top priorities by senior management.



### Types of performance-based recognition programs:

- Quality improvement
- Productivity
- Customer care
- Product/service innovation
- Wellness participation

1. Trendicators 2017 Report by Engage2Excel  
2. Trendicators 2016 Report by Engage2Excel

# 6 Create more engaging candidate and onboarding experiences

An area often overlooked in the development of employee engagement strategies is recruitment. Your company's ability to engage job seekers in the recruitment process will significantly influence its success in the war for talent. And the quality of your onboarding program is key to reducing voluntary turnover rates, which can run as high as 50 percent in the first year.

Redesigning your recruitment processes and onboarding programs to foster greater engagement can significantly impact acceptance rates, quality of hire, hiring manager satisfaction and first-year retention rates. Consider the following research findings when contemplating whether to include recruitment in your company's engagement strategy.

## How engagement impacts recruitment, onboarding, and retention:<sup>3</sup>

**RECRUITMENT:** The number-one reason cited by job seekers for accepting a job offer is "being treated with dignity and respect during the hiring process."

**ONBOARDING:** More than two-thirds of job seekers say that their experience on the first day of the job will impact their decision to stay with the organization for more than a month.

**RETENTION:** Nearly one quarter (24%) of job seekers say that "lack of recognition, appreciation, or respect" is the most important reason that would cause them to leave their current employer.

3. Trendicators 2017 Report by Engage2Excel



## 7

# Develop a plan for improving employee engagement at your company

Hopefully, the suggestions and research presented on the previous pages have stimulated ideas for developing your company's employee engagement strategy. As with any strategic initiative, getting stakeholder buy-in is critical to success. A useful tool for socializing your plans is a project charter summary, organized as follows:

**PROBLEM:** Summarize how employee engagement levels impact performance and profitability at your company. Use research from this guide and other sources to support your problem statement.

**CHALLENGE:** Describe how employee engagement is being managed at your company today. If there is no cohesive strategy or if the efforts are ad hoc, say so.

**SOLUTION:** Summarize your strategy, timeline, program components and estimated costs for the new employee engagement strategy.

**BENEFITS:** There are no quick fixes for improving employee engagement. However, each component of your program should be associated with specific business benefits along with metrics for assessing business impact.

**For more resources on improving employee engagement, visit [engage2excel.com/resources](https://engage2excel.com/resources).**



# Increase engagement to drive results throughout the talent lifecycle



Employee  
Recognition



Talent  
Acquisition



Employee  
Surveys

What's missing from your employee engagement strategy? How about an ROI you can take to your CFO. Engage2Excel helps companies engage employees from pre-hire to retirement to improve talent acquisition, performance and retention.

**Learn more about industry-leading employee engagement solutions from Engage2Excel. Call 800.688.3024 or visit [Engage2Excel.com](https://www.engage2excel.com).**

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