

10 WAYS TO MAXIMIZE ENGAGEMENT



- 1. Provide motivating work.** Engaged workers can get lost in their work; they find it fascinating, stimulating, and appropriately challenging.
- 2. Offer meaningful opportunities.** Whether the opportunities are to grow and develop, work with interesting and talented people, or fully contribute their own unique talents, many individuals are looking for work that matters and seems worth doing.
- 3. Recognize the importance of “work fit.”** A great job for one individual may be completely overwhelming or uninspiring to another. Similar jobs in different organizations may “fit” differently and occupations that provided endless opportunities a year or so ago may be less in demand in a changing economy. Fit may encompass skills/competencies, degrees/credentials, personal style and individual characteristics, interests, values and/or attributes of a profession or industry.
- 4. Equip supervisors to support employees’ careers.** Many supervisors and managers tasked with having “career conversations” with their employees don’t have any idea how to start. Some supervisors/managers may unintentionally sabotage employees’ career development because they want to keep them in the current jobs they do so well. Supervisors/managers play a crucial role in retaining and engaging key employees; provide the tools and resources they need to develop their teams.
- 5. Strengthen co-worker relationships.** Although teambuilding / team strengthening activities may seem like “nice to haves” or optional perks, career engagement is enhanced by positive relationships with colleagues and a sense of fitting in well with one’s work team. To maximize engagement, it’s important to address workplace conflicts, foster strong collegial relationships, and create a safe workplace that embraces diversity and has zero tolerance for harassment or bullying.
- 6. Provide relevant resources.** Engaged workers have the tools, resources, and supports they need to do their best work. Budgets are adequate, demands are reasonable for their available time, and supervisors are understanding and supportive.
- 7. Continuously monitor alignment.** When individuals have to compromise their deeply held values, navigate interpersonal conflicts, or jeopardize their health, their career engagement will be impacted. Keep open lines of communication and explore tensions or non-verbal cues that may indicate a values conflict, toxic environment, relationship challenges, or other related issues that may be detracting from employees’ wellbeing at work.
- 8. Facilitate work-life balance.** Role conflicts impact many workers, as they concurrently juggle a number of complex life roles. “I need more time” is an oft-heard complaint and when roles collide, people may cut back on sleep, sacrifice healthy eating and exercise, and feel guilty about not spending enough time with family and friends. Work-life imbalance isn’t sustainable long-term – to maximize employee engagement, support employees to achieve a lifestyle that meets their needs.
- 9. Respect work-life boundaries.** Especially in work that depends on technologies like email, social media, texting, and mobile phones, it has become increasingly unclear where work begins and ends each day. Although working remotely can contribute to work-life balance, working 24/7 will take a big toll. To maximize the engagement of all employees, ensure that work demands are reasonable for the number of hours or days an employee is paid and encourage supervisors/managers to respect work-life boundaries and model a healthy and sustainable workload.
- 10. Align challenge and capacity.** The level of perceived challenge in one’s work (and life) is directly impacted by both individual and organizational capacity. Although too much challenge is overwhelming, too little challenge results in a sense of being underutilized. Long term extremes at either end contribute to disengagement. To maximize career engagement, support individuals to take on new challenges to match their capacity and provide the resources they need to successfully handle the challenges connected with their constantly shifting roles.

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