

# 13 Simple Ways to Get Employees Engaged





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What manager wouldn't love to walk into the office each morning to a group of smiling, eager employees, ready to take on the day?

But the reality is ... that just doesn't happen.

### Distracted and disengaged

Study after study shows the majority of employees struggle just to make it through the day. Presenteeism – the act of showing up to work unfocused – costs companies \$150 billion a year in productivity, according to the American Medical Association.

So why are your people sleepwalking through the day? They're unengaged! A 2018 Gallup survey reveals only 15% of employees consider themselves engaged in their work.



## Benefits of engagement

Apart from making the workplace a happier place, engaged employees just make good business sense. Satisfied employees create a higher quality of work. Not to mention the happier the employees, the less likely they are to look for a new job – and everyone wants to hold on tight to their top talent.

While transforming every employee's attitude can seem daunting, improving engagement doesn't have to be a massive undertaking. A lot of small initiatives can add up to make a huge difference.



## Effortless engagement

There are several areas HR pros can focus on for maximum engagement, according to Tim Eisenhauer, author of *Who the Hell Wants to Work for You? Mastering Employee Engagement*. Implementing a few of these simple ideas in each category will set you on the path to a more productive workforce:

### Communication

- 1. Encourage staff to speak up.** Good ideas are buzzing around in your employees' heads constantly, but that does you no good if they don't share them. Their hesitation usually comes from a fear of criticism. To fix this, make it known all ideas are welcome, and promote an open-door policy. Fostering a safe space for communication will have employees rushing to offer suggestions.

2. **Clarify goals and responsibilities.** It's hard for employees to be engaged if they're confused about their role or what's expected of them. Every time a new project comes up, take the extra time to thoroughly explain all the details and answer questions – the result is always worth your while.
3. **Involve employees in the hiring process.** Bringing an employee into the search for a new hire will make them feel appreciated and useful. Not only will it boost engagement, but the employee will undoubtedly offer helpful insight to make a better selection.



## Recognition

- 4. Reward employees only for a job well done.** Recognizing when your employees do good work is always a good idea, but it's important to be careful not to overdo it. Dishing out compliments willy-nilly can have the opposite effect, causing employees to get too comfortable and slack off. By reserving rewards for the best work only, employees will strive to achieve a higher standard.
- 5. Celebrate birthdays and accomplishments.** One time to overdo it with the celebrating? Birthdays and milestones. Employees will feel like you care if you take the time to wish them a happy birthday or congratulate them on a new baby.
- 6. Have staff recognize each other, too.** Don't leave the praising solely to managers. Encourage employees to compliment their peers on excellent work. This will create respect and harmony and lead to improved teamwork.



## Fun and Socialization

7. **Organize games and happy hours.** Show your employees you want them to have fun in the office and get friendly with their co-workers with a little old-fashioned fun. Plan a happy hour at the end of a particularly busy week and let your staff unwind. Or, carve some time out of the day for everyone to de-stress by playing the occasional board game.
8. **Bring in food and treats.** Planning a potluck lunch every now and then or surprising staff with donuts or ice cream is a very simple way to promote socialization and brighten your employees' day.
9. **Make your workspace unique.** Dull, gray cubes and plain white walls don't do much to inspire creativity. Try giving your office a little facelift. Even adding little things like pops of color, artwork and plants can impact on morale.



## Professional development

10. **Perfect the onboarding process.** There's no such thing as too much assistance during a new hire's first few months. It may seem like overkill, but the more involved you are during a new hire's onboarding process, the more likely they are to stay long term.
11. **Let employees use natural talents.** Everyone on your team has an area where they really shine, so let them use their strengths! Nothing tanks engagement more than assigning employees tasks they aren't comfortable with. Match up projects with people's natural talents and they'll be happy to tackle them.
12. **Be a mentor.** Employees are going to encounter plenty of personal and professional challenges throughout their careers. Let them know you're there for them! Carve out time to check in and let your people know you're available to just listen or dole out some serious advice.
13. **Offer education opportunities.** Get familiar with your employees' career aspirations and offer them tools to achieve their goals. This could mean helping them get enrolled in classes, rearranging their schedules for an internship or bringing workshops to the office. Recognize your people have aspirations and help them reach those and they'll be happy to stick around.

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