

Awesome job at crushing your KPIs this month, Cristina!

Thanks! Setting up that new team was a big help!



Leon George

I've sent the supplier list to your...

Matt Young: Hey Lachie, yup I can do...

Boost Your Employee Engagement Strategy

Lachlan...

...

A large smartphone is the central focus, displaying the "Shift Feedback" app. The screen shows a survey with the title "Your manager would like feedback on how your shift went" and a note that the feedback is anonymous. The survey includes three sections: "How was your work week?" with two smiley face options (the happy one is selected), "What worked well?" with five category buttons (Staffing level, Management, Team mates, Organisation, and Morale, with Management and Organisation selected), and "What didn't work well?" with the same five category buttons (Staffing level, Management, Team mates, Organisation, and Morale, with Staffing level selected). At the bottom, there is a "Leave a note" section with the text "Good shift today but very busy". The phone's status bar at the top shows "Sketch", signal strength, "9:41 AM", and "100%" battery.

..... Sketch 9:41 AM 100%

× Shift Feedback

Your manager would like feedback on how your shift went
This is anonymous, but you team and the day of your shift will be sent.

How was your work week?

What worked well?

Staffing level Management Team mates
Organisation Morale

What didn't work well?

Staffing level Management Team mates
Organisation Morale

Leave a note

Good shift today but very busy

All good, thanks!

Drinks on me! 😊

Meeting on 2pm.

How's your shift?

No worries. 😊

Will be there!



Introduction

Despite years of discussion around the importance of employee engagement to hiring, retention and productivity, only 39 percent of employees are engaged, according to data from Gallup.

Time, dedication, and a clear leadership mandate are vital to improving employee engagement. While transforming employee engagement doesn't happen overnight, there are many things that can be done both in the short and long term that can move employee engagement in the right direction.

When changes in employee engagement happen, the payoff is clear. Organizations with high levels of employee engagement achieve better earnings-per-share, and see substantially better customer engagement, higher productivity, better retention, fewer accidents and higher profitability.

The trick is understanding who has the power to influence employee engagement, and what they can do to generate change, said Jill Christensen, employee engagement consultant and author of “If Not You, Who? Cracking the Code of Employee Disengagement.”

“Poor engagement is not HR’s fault,” she said. Employee engagement is regularly blamed on HR because it is a “people problem,” but in fact, it is entirely shaped by the actions of senior leaders. They define the culture, the mission and the attitude in any organization, and their actions determine how employees respond. “All senior leaders need to drive the employee engagement journey from the start,” she said.

HR still needs to plan, implement and measure employee engagement strategies — but senior leaders need to be the voices of the program to make it work. It's a collaboration, and this ebook will discuss how senior leaders, HR and managers can work together and utilize technology to boost employee engagement.

Boost Your Employee Engagement Strategy



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Chapter 1:

Follow the Employee Engagement Roadmap

Employee engagement can be improved when companies focus on the right things. Building a roadmap will help you navigate key areas of people management and its changing terrains. Creating a roadmap for your organization is a great way to jumpstart your engagement strategy and make sure that it delivers results.

Your Engagement Strategy Roadmap



Make a plan

a. Get leaders on board.

Leaders will never independently take ownership of engagement, so HR has to pull them in. A good way to get their buy-in is to explain the direct impact of employee engagement to the company's bottom line.

b. Ask employees what they think.

If you want to identify your engagement issues, you have to listen to what employees are saying, said Amanda Popiela, researcher with The Conference Board. "Continuous listening strategies are key to understanding engagement." Along with reviewing annual survey results, she suggests conducting periodic pulse surveys, hosting employee focus groups, monitoring social media posts, and talking to employee teams about what they love about working for your organization, and what needs to change.

c. Equip managers.

Prioritize leadership development and train managers to have good coaching skills, like how to give feedback, build trust, or manage conflict. Management training has to be part of the plan because a huge part of engaging employees lies in how managers relate to their teams.



d. Set realistic goals and expectations.

If you want to foster change you have to hold managers accountable, said consultant Jill Christensen. She suggested setting a goal to increase engagement levels by a specific amount in one year then tying those results to performance reviews. “That’s how you make culture change happen.”



Start engaging

a. Make employee engagement part of every conversation.

Define specific communication steps for managers and leaders to integrate engagement into their talking points. These might include discussing engagement issues in every team meeting, sharing engagement strategies in town hall events, and having weekly one-on-ones with team members to identify their specific concerns or needs. “You need to tell them exactly what to do or they won’t do it,” Christensen warned.

b. Keep employees up to date.

Employees want to feel like they have a voice and that their opinions matter, so keep them in the loop. Report employee engagement survey results, share your action plans to address specific problems, and keep them up to date on progress. Transparency and communication are vital to employee engagement.

c. Teach managers to coach.

Managers are busy and will often skip training to focus on the next deadline. So you have to make it easy to access, immediately relevant and a clear priority, Popiela said. One way to do that is to get senior leadership involved. Popiela worked with a financial services company whose CEO posts a monthly webcast discussing one tip for managers on how to improve engagement. “Managers know what they should be doing, but they don’t always do it,” she said. These short, thought-provoking webcasts make them stop and think about what they could do better.





d. Deal with the disengaged.

When teams have toxic, negative or disruptive members, no amount of coaching will make a difference. “These employees can be toxic,” Christensen said. And it’s up to managers to deal with them. They need to be ready to have these difficult conversations, set clear performance goals, and let go of people who refuse to change. A lot of managers ignore toxic employees because they don’t have the skills to deal with them, but the consequences of this approach can be severe, she said. “When leaders don’t take action with these employees, it will breed disengagement in everyone around them.”



Measure results

a. Conduct annual surveys.

The annual employee survey is the best baseline measure of engagement and proof that your efforts are working. Remember, even small shifts are a good sign. It’s also a good metric or sensor to understand what can be improved in your employee engagement strategy.

b. Conduct pulse surveys.

Short pulse surveys that sample a percentage of the employee population, or ask everyone a few questions, can give you a sense of progress and help you see what’s working (or not). Be careful not to overdo it, and don’t use surveys to replace real conversations.

c. Check your Net Promoter Score.

Employers can now use NPS to measure employee engagement. The one-question survey tells you how likely your staff members are to recommend your company as a place to work on a scale from 0 to 10. “It’s a simple way to gauge engagement,” Christensen said. And it can be a quick and easy way to demonstrate results.

d. Share the data.

Any time you survey employees you have to share the results, otherwise it could actually make things worse. Report engagement levels to the entire company, celebrate big successes and share what you plan to do next, Popiela said. Then discuss the data with executives, drawing connections where possible between engagement and productivity, retention, and business performance. “It’s important to show them the ‘so what’ of improved engagement,” she said. “Especially when it affects the bottom line.”



Chapter 2:

Begin Engaging as You Onboard

An employee's first day on the job is a crucial part of engagement. Unfortunately, it is typically spent filling out a raft of paperwork. If they finished the daunting deluge of forms in front of them, there might be time to find their workstation only to stare at a blank screen, since IT had no clue that a new employee was joining the organization.

Most organizations have some type of orientation process for new hires. Too often though, such programs are neglected, poorly run and mismanaged.

That experience transforms an eager new recruit into an employee who is disengaged and disillusioned with their new company based on their first day at work. Rather than going home and effusively boasting about a great first day, your newest staff member is more apt to mumble, "Eh, I'm just glad today is over."

Make onboarding memorable and easy

Onboarding — the process of providing new employees with the key information and training to be immediately successful in their new roles — should be simple, engaging and perhaps most importantly, repeatable.

Thanks to a continuous surge in innovative human resources technology, a simple, paperless online onboarding solution has organizations bidding farewell to the tedious stream of paperwork and enhancing their employee's first days on the job.

The advantage of paperless onboarding

When an organization adopts a digital onboarding solution, everything becomes paperless. The new employee's banking details, withholdings, important addresses, emergency contacts and immigration status are immediately integrated into payroll and admin without a single sheet of paper being passed along. Online onboarding allows new hires to examine health and retirement benefits options and other company perks at their leisure.

HR also gets a valuable early-alert solution to schedule IT and other stakeholders that a new employee will be joining the organization. This portion of online onboarding should become a seamless, well-structured experience that HR can use whenever a new hire joins the organization.



Getting social

In most cases a new hire knows no one in their new workplace. Other than some cursory interactions with the immediate hiring team prior to their first day, the new person is walked awkwardly through the workplace with basic introductions and small talk.

Digital onboarding software can launch a social interaction well before the new hire ever enters the workplace. Access to the onboarding software allows the new employee to begin learning about their future teammates, supervisors, key executives and responsibilities.

They can pre-enroll in company- and job-specific training courses, survey employee resource groups and open a dialogue with future colleagues. From hobbies to food restrictions, managers can get to know their new employee.

One chance at a first impression

The onboarding process is a new hire's introduction to the organization and its workplace culture. A [report](#) revealed that organizations with a strong onboarding process improved new-hire retention by 82 percent and productivity by over 70 percent. Make the first step count and set up a new employee for success. An effective and inviting onboarding process holds the key to improving employee morale, productivity and retention.

Employee Onboarding

Just enter the employee's name and email and we'll send an invitation their way!

| | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Full Name | Email | Phone |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |

Add a message for new staff

Welcome to the team!

[+ Add Another Employee](#)

[What do employees see? Check out the app demo](#)



Chapter 3:

Normalize Timely Communication and Feedback

Communication and feedback are vital to the workforce and it should be part of daily processes, regardless of industry. However, it's common for organizations to wait for performance reviews to sit down with their teams and relay feedback, and it's not an ideal scenario and detrimental to employee engagement.

In a survey of HR leaders, 89 percent agree that ongoing peer feedback and check-ins have a positive impact on their organizations. Furthermore, another study found that 64% of HR engagement leaders say an always-on feedback tool is essential to an engagement listening program, but only 20% have this kind of tool in place.

Timely communication and feedback goes beyond optimizing operations. It is essential to understanding the general sentiment of your workforce and fostering a culture that encourages voicing out ideas and asking questions. Psychological safety is important to cultivate in your team because it allows each member to share thoughts and opinions without fear of being shut down or invalidated. When employees feel that their opinion matters, only then will managers get honest feedback and valuable insights that can truly help the organization.

How can employers establish constant and timely communication? Here are some of the ways:



Make feedback immediate.

Noticed an employee stepping up and performing really well?

Observed a member of the staff working slower than usual? Whether you're noticing positive or negative things in your workforce's performance, it's important to let them know right away. Commend them for a job well done or point out things that they can improve on. You don't have to wait for the next performance review to share your observations and provide coaching.



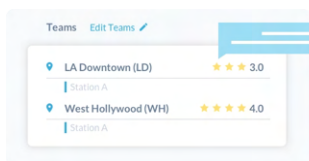
Conduct regular check-ins.

Quick check-ins can provide an avenue for managers and staff to communicate, identify what's working well and address gaps in a more agile yet organized way. Regular check-ins happen in quicker intervals, whether daily or weekly, depending on what's suitable for a team. Such practice can help nip potential issues in the bud and helps the team stay focused and aligned on what needs to be done.



Equip teams with tools to communicate and provide feedback

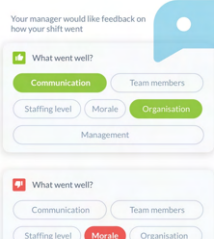
The modern workforce requires efficient solutions to be productive. With teams that are mostly on the go and the rise of remote work, employers should provide systems that allow for their teams to easily communicate and provide feedback. Here are some of the technologies that can make communication seamless for teams.



An automated platform for managers continuously rate employee performance

Rating employee performance should not be an arduous process. With the right platform and technology, providing continuous and ongoing assessment is simple.

Workforce.com provides an employee rating system that allows for managers to record employee performance immediately after their shift ends using a five-star rating system. They can take the input and build skill profiles for their front-line employees. As the assessment continues over the course of that person's tenure with the organization, the solution reveals ongoing performance over time. It provides the perspective and guidance managers need to blend those who are competent in their work as well as those who require more training.

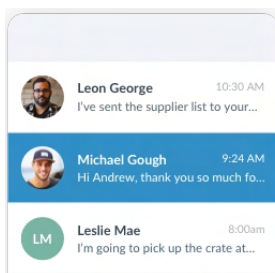


An easy to use system for team members to provide feedback about their shifts

It's also vital for employees to have a platform for sharing their feedback. Workforce.com simplifies this process for them.



Workforce.com allows employees to provide feedback about their shift. Upon clocking out, they can easily provide feedback on what worked well and what needs to improve about different aspects of the operation such as communication, staffing levels, morale, and management. Employees can add in their comments, providing managers with more context about the feedback given.



Chat or instant messaging applications

Most companies use some form of instant messaging within their organizations, but it is typically separate from their workforce management platform.

Workforce.com has a built-in chat application in the system that allows employees to send instant messages to each other. Managers can use this to send group messages to their team or send individual messages to certain employees.

The advantage of having a built-in chat application with your workforce management system is that you no longer need to switch between apps just to communicate with the team. All correspondence is in a single place together with other vital information and processes such as schedules, timesheet, leave management, shift feedback, payroll, and analytics.





Chapter 4:

Redefine Performance Reviews

No matter how comprehensive you think your employee programs are, it will all be for nothing if you don't check in with them, understand their sentiment, and see what's really going on.

Performance reviews are a great avenue to foster good communication and feedback. It is also a good opportunity for leaders to tie in the performance of their team with the organization's goals, mission and vision.

In-person versus remote performance review

Generally face-to-face is the ideal way to conduct performance reviews, but video also provides an effective way for managers to have conversations with employees.

Much of the conversation will go the same, but there's just one key difference. Video performance reviews give employees the chance to record the conversation relatively easily, said Lori Holsinger, senior principal with Mercer. Proactive companies remind managers of what they should and shouldn't say, phrasing of certain statements and what they can say to help employees understand the message, she added.

"We are hopeful that regardless of where [this] dialogue between manager and employee happens, it could be recorded and shared with anyone and we'd be proud of what our leaders say," she said. "[So] even if I'm providing a difficult message to an employee, I do it in a way that's respectful, empathetic and honest. [But] the reality is sometimes managers struggle."

According to a Mercer [study](#), eight out of 10 managers lack the skill to give feedback and provide coaching to employees.

"It's a number that companies have been wanting to address for some time, and unfortunately it's a number that tends to stay pretty steady over time," Holsinger said. "In part that's because there's not a quick fix to increase manager skill in the area of having empathetic, honest and direct conversations." It takes time for managers to build these skills, and companies need to be patient. Companies should prioritize improving such skills when building leadership development strategies.



Frequency of performance reviews

There's no one size fits all approach for how frequently managers should be conducting and writing performance reviews. Frequency may depend on an organization's stability.

"If we think about any shift that suddenly requires people to work differently, we want to see communication increase. But as things begin to stabilize, that communication does not need to be at the same height," Holsinger said.

Frequency may also depend on the type of organization. High-growth companies and startups likely will require more frequent performance reviews than a more stable, well-established organization, Holsinger said.

"The key is to ask, 'Is there any chance that this employee is unclear on what our priorities are as a business, what their contributions should be to the business or to the team, and what they need to do on a day-to-day basis?' Because you want to make sure that the frequency of communication follows alongside that," she added.



Companies with an overly regimented strategy may be doing employees a disservice, she said. For example, some companies may conduct regular monthly or quarterly performance reviews. While this might work for certain business units that see a lot of change and growth, more stable teams may see this as a waste of time. Performance reviews should not happen when they aren't necessary, Holsinger said.

Meet employees where they are

Holsinger said the best manager-employee relationships are the ones where managers meet employees where they are in terms of their current job and their long-term goals. Managers can build that trust between themselves and those they manage by showing that investment in their career as it is now and in their career growth.



Rethink the term ‘performance review’

The term “performance review” can come off as dated, Holsinger said. It comes across as managers simply focusing on the “rearview mirror” rather than using that discussion as an opportunity to look ahead and talk about career growth and development.

While many companies tie performance reviews to compensation, that’s not enough. Companies also have the opportunity to tie performance reviews with organizational goals, its mission and vision, she said.

“Let’s not lose our focus by saying that the main focus should be linking performance and compensation,” she added. “But rather the existence of performance management, the reason we want managers and employees to have conversations, is to help the employee better contribute to our overall purpose as a company and our strategy. And by the way, if you as an employee can do that, we’re going to reward you — not only with compensation but also through your career growth with our company.”





Chapter 5:

Give Managers the Tools to Retain and Engage

The old adage that people leave managers, not companies, rings true since many are not equipped to efficiently guide a workforce. Software solutions combined with labor analytics will help managers engage their team.

Data from DDI establishes that 57 percent of employees quit because of their boss. DDI's study also reports that 14 percent have left multiple jobs because of their managers and an additional 32 percent have seriously considered leaving because of their manager.

Many managers are ill equipped and poorly trained to efficiently run a workforce. Whether it's tallying employee headcount or engaging workers, employers can arm managers with the tools to ensure they become valued top-line supervisors prepared to retain and sustain their employees.

One of the most confounding aspects of a manager's responsibilities is properly scheduling staff. Tracking employee rosters, hours worked and remaining PTO on paper or on outdated spreadsheets is fraught with opportunities for mistakes.

By eliminating tedious and time-consuming paper-based systems, managers can easily and accurately schedule the right person in the right place at the right time.





Consider the following:

Implement scheduling technology

Efficiency is the key to workforce scheduling software.

Determining staffing levels is a constant challenge and can be the most perplexing aspect of staff scheduling. Labor analytics fueled by a comprehensive software solution can forecast resource needs and gaps. It also integrates both timekeeping and attendance functions. Employee profiles — who is available when, or who is on paid time off — are available with a few clicks.

| | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|----|--------|
| Bradley Smith 🕒 16 | | OG | 0 1 |
| Macie Todd 🕒 40 | IM 07:00 16:00 | IM | 0 1 |
| Luis Michaels 🕒 32 | SA 07:00 16:00 | SA | 0 1 |
| Anderson Hill 🕒 40 | OG 07:00 16:00 | OG | 0 1 |
| Christiana Ham 🕒 24 | | IM | 0 1 |

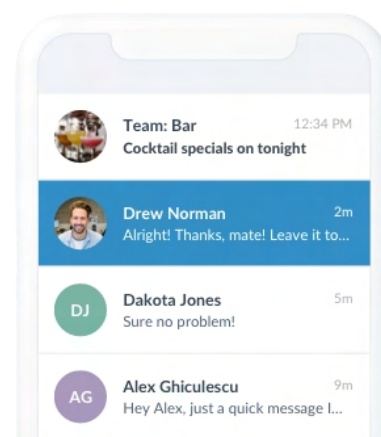
Know organizational needs to create a smart schedule

Don't let your schedule dictate you. Be the boss — literally and figuratively — with software that puts you in charge of the process. Eliminate the gut instinct and implement a software solution to accurately assess customer needs and employee resources. Effective, analytical employee scheduling lowers the company's labor costs and maximizes customer satisfaction by matching resources to demand.

Stay agile and make quick decisions

There are plenty of times when the unexpected occurs. From freak snowstorms that impede travel to a flu bug sweeping across the workplace, scheduling adjustments have to occur quickly and effectively in times of an emergency.

Scheduling software allows for quick communication with workers. Incorporating a scheduling tool with mobile technology including a communications app builds 24/7 schedule access and puts real-time communication at a manager's fingertips.



Workforce.com Chat

Measure, assess and fine tune

Employee scheduling should undergo regular performance reviews and frequent analysis.

Incorporate employee feedback and business performance indicators into the assessment. Robust scheduling software will collect crucial data to assess and reveal insights. By understanding and evaluating the data, managers can better optimize their scheduling process.



Chapter 6:

Tech Strategies to Engage Your Workforce

Employee engagement is an elusive goal that organizations constantly strive to attain. Experts say it could take years to see significant change in engagement scores.

Even so, it's worth the long-term efforts to increase employee engagement. According to [Gallup](#), higher engagement rates are correlated with higher productivity, better retention, fewer accidents and higher profitability.

Here are some employee engagement tips and how technology can make a workforce management professional's life easier and more streamlined as they try to increase engagement.

Employee Engagement Tips:



Cultivate a sense of purpose among employees

One reason employees may feel dissatisfied with their jobs and plan on leaving is because they feel a “lack of purpose” at work. A recent Deloitte [study](#) found that only 37 percent of millennials think business leaders “make a positive impact on the world.” A separate Deloitte [report](#) clarified that the workforce as a whole, not just younger generations, appreciates when a company adopts a higher purpose — “moving beyond profit to a focus on doing good things for individuals, customers and society.”

Part of showing employees what the values and mission of the organization are includes showcasing workplace examples via the company's communication channels. Employers can share stories of employees embodying the company's mission or values, and technology-enabled communication platforms can help employers spread the message to as many employees as possible.



**Ask and give
feedback on a
regular basis**

Technology provides exceptional opportunities to motivate your staff and engage their participation by providing ongoing feedback and building a two-way relationship. Selecting the right workforce app develops a continuous dialogue that improves your internal communications and builds a consistent, trusted relationship with employees.

Choosing the internal communications app that best suits your organization has far-ranging implications. Among the most effective forms of communication that your workforce app can provide is employee feedback.

Employees want to know where they stand with their employers. Likewise, it's important for them to have a platform where they can rate their job experience, as well as their workload and the quality of management. An effective workforce app can make that communication faster and more focused.

Constant colleague feedback also encourages your staff to communicate with one another and enables growth in the company. Employees can use communication-based apps, for example, to swap shifts. This process encourages staff to remain open with one another and enhances growth in the company as well.

Employees can use this online feedback to build an authentic, trusting relationship with each other, as well as with supervisors. Peer-to-peer communication coupled with supervisor appraisals goes a long way in helping them become better in areas they need to improve and showing genuine appreciation in the areas that they have excelled in.

Using a communications app is redefining the way we think of employee engagement. Implementing such tools in your workplace can transform the way you operate and make feedback immediate and continuous.



Equip managers with the solutions to lead their teams efficiently

Administrative tasks can take so much of managers' time — time that can be spent coaching and guiding their teams.

When managers are equipped with the right platform to efficiently build schedules, track time and attendance, manage leaves, monitor important metrics, and have complete oversight of their operations, they gain better insights that enable them to identify the team's strengths and gaps. As a result, they can make better decisions and engage their team more.

Employees tend to be more engaged when they feel that they are understood and heard. When managers spend more time on the ground than in the backroom dealing with paperwork, they can better optimize their operations.





CONCLUSION:

Improving employee engagement is a continuous process

Employee engagement within a company takes a unified and deliberate approach from senior leaders, HR, and managers. When results are achieved, it doesn't stop there. It's a continuous process of strengthening and reinforcing a good company culture.

A lot of research has been done to better understand what propels good employee engagement, but companies need to understand that there's not a single approach to it. A lot depends on various factors, and information about those is well within the organization. They just need to figure out what the gaps are and assess the situation based on employee feedback, sentiment, and performance.

Workforce.com provides a way for companies to strengthen workforce management in a way that contributes to better employee engagement. The platform is robust and automates processes, such as onboarding, employee scheduling, timesheets, payroll and reporting. It's also built in with features for seamless feedback and communication. With shift ratings and the chat app, teams can easily share their feedback on their operations and communicate with teammates and leads. Ultimately, this helps managers in optimizing workforce processes as well as coaching and training their team.

See Workforce.com in action. [Book a demo](#) or [start a free trial](#) today.



