

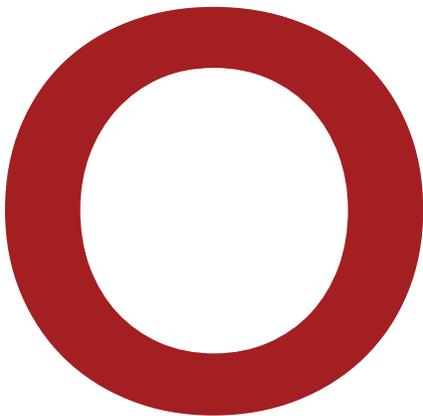


# Why Employee Engagement Isn't Getting Better

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One of the biggest obstacles facing organizations over the past decade is the dilemma of stagnant or declining employee engagement. Companies are wondering what needs to be done differently in order to create a true impact on the state of engagement in the workforce today.

This whitepaper aims to answer a variety of reasons why employee engagement isn't improving, while offering suggestions on how to take a new and unique approach to improve engagement at your organization.

# Roles Are Different Now



**Awareness of employee engagement being a problem in the workforce occurred shortly after the time when the workforce in America changed.<sup>1</sup> Technology companies replaced assembly lines, workforces went from male dominated to diverse and gender-neutral, and people's daily jobs gained great variety.**

In the past, the fairly typical job roles and lack of diversity in corporate America created a conformity of engagement. Now, the great variety of cultures, jobs, and work environments adds complexity to the puzzle of keeping every employee energized, motivated and productive.

Add on top of that the multitude of generations working today in addition to the challenge of managing remote workers - it's no wonder keeping employees engaged is such a hot topic.

Managers wanting to impact engagement numbers should consider that every aspect of the workforce today involves immense variety.

With this diversity comes a required tolerance and understanding for the varied ways in which people become highly energized and motivated to do their best work.

# Action Is Too Slow



**Engagement surveys simply measure a point in time. Yet, many occurrences and outside forces that change week-to-week may impact the engagement levels of employees. Even still, when engagement surveys are executed at organizations, often organizations are slow to respond – if at all.**

Employees begin resenting such surveys if they don't see an immediate call to action. And if the organization doesn't do anything to implement change quickly enough, time passes leaving the data irrelevant.

**If your organization is preparing to execute a survey, make sure to go into it with the intent of:**

- a) sharing the results with the workforce and
- b) being prepared to organize swift action for addressing engagement issues in a visible way.

# Lack Of Alignment



**An organization's top performers are the ones making the greatest impact and driving quantifiable results, such as sales numbers. However, top performers who are in the wrong job role or work environment can easily become average performers or even underachievers.**

By understanding individuals' natural motivators, organizations are able to enhance employee engagement and performance. When equipped with proper information, managers can select employees for jobs and team roles based on how their natural motivators align with the target role.

Additionally, rather than dismissing demotivated employees, informed managers and human resource professionals are able to design work contexts that better fit with their natural motivations. When employers are able to achieve this alignment, the entire organization benefits from a positive shift in productivity and engagement.

# Surface Level Comprehension Of Engagement



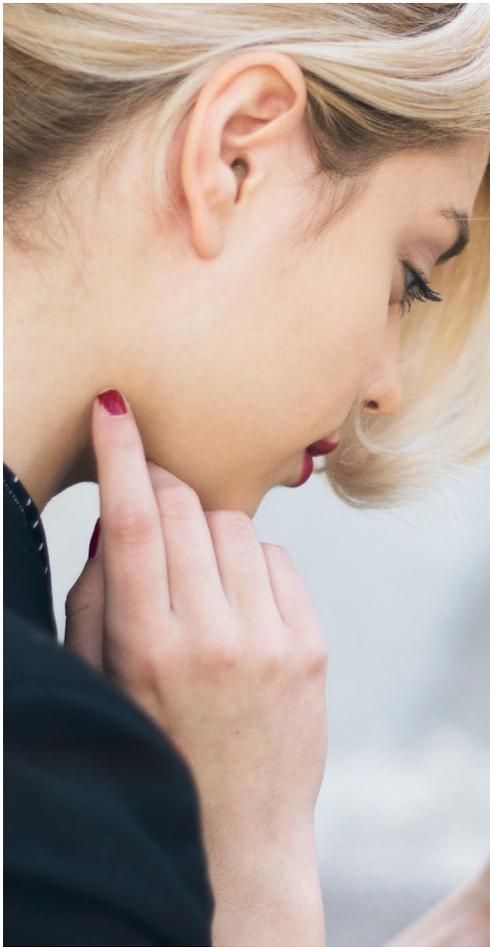
**There are a lot of potential stimuli that impact how people are engaged, along with the level of their engagement. However, often the leadership executing engagement surveys don't truly understand why their people aren't engaged.**

And it's not their fault.

Typical engagement surveys don't dig deep enough to get to a level at which a manager can make effective change. In order to truly drive engagement, a thorough understanding of how each individual feels about his or her work and work environment is critical. This granularity of information is difficult to gather and report on with any amount of scale using traditional assessment tools.

Information, therefore, isn't calibrated as a consequence of only gathering surface-level information about engagement levels.

# One Size Doesn't Fit All



**The common approaches to improving engagement thus far, have been anything but specific to each unique individual affected. Engagement improvement initiatives are often designed as blanket, one-size-fits-all remedies that aim to drive engagement for a large group of people at one time.**

Standard incentives, enhancements to benefits, total rewards programs, communications sent to everybody in one mass message, and routine training programs are large-scale modalities that don't necessarily cause any of the employees impacted by them to be more excited about their roles and their work.

This suggests that, despite hard work on new initiatives and incurring additional expense, these approaches simply haven't been thoughtful enough to truly make a difference.

# Not Enough Emphasis On Discretionary Effort



**Companies that do take action after an engagement survey is executed often do so with one of the many extrinsic initiatives mentioned earlier. However, unbeknownst to the organization, this can often do more harm than good if an employee is already naturally motivated to do his or her job.<sup>2</sup>**

Instead, organizations should consider gaining a deeper understanding of what drives each individual employee. Rather than merely measuring engagement, companies should strive to uncover the natural motivations of along with how well the work environment is supporting their natural drivers.

By identifying the underlying motivations of employees, organizations can better understand what drives their behaviors and determine which job and team roles fit them best.

It's only when a manager understands how to truly capitalize on the natural motivators of his or her employees and couple it with the ideal role and work context that they're able to significantly increase discretionary performance and overall engagement of each team member. ♦



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