

How to engage and motivate employees

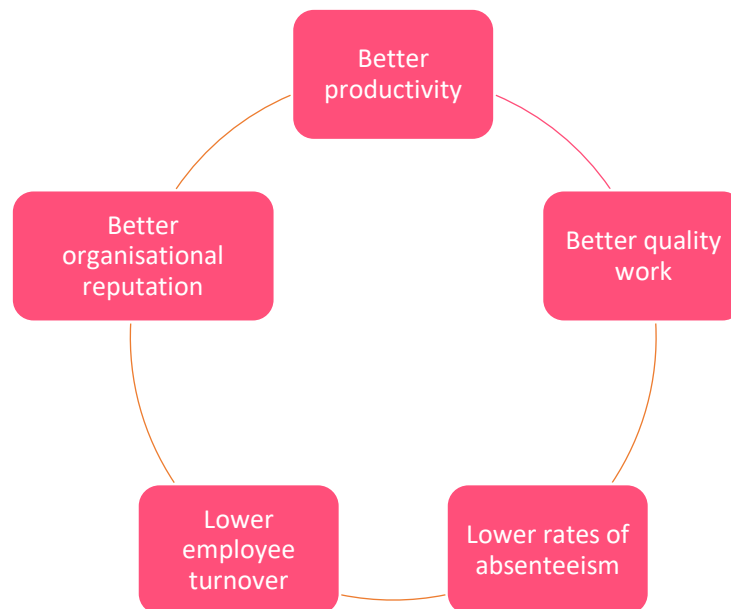
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The engaged worker

Employee engagement is of crucial importance to an organisation, and it is important for managers to take steps at improving this. Having an unengaged workforce can have negative ripple effects on overall organisational productivity. So, what can you do to improve employee engagement?

Why you should make employee engagement a top business priority



6 strategies to increase engagement

Make the work meaningful

- Make sure that employees know how the work that they do ties into the bigger company picture.
- Why does what they do matter? Who does it benefit?

Promote career and skills development

- Help your employees develop in their role.
- Provide them with coaching and regular feedback
- Have regular check-ins with them and make sure you're aware of the support they'd benefit from

Make them feel valued, respected, and listened to

- Make sure employees feel like they are part of the conversation.
- Ask them for feedback and suggestions.
- Get their input on bigger projects and development plans, where appropriate.
- Give them autonomy. Don't micromanage, and trust that they will figure it out.

Create a positive work environment

- Create a work environment in which employees are happy to be in each day.
- Your employees should not dread coming to work because of the environment/ certain colleagues.
- Provide opportunities for collaboration and teamwork, so employees don't feel siloed.

Make employees feel positively challenged

- Set the bar high for your employees and make clear that you believe in their abilities.
- Make sure they feel challenged (within reason), and that they believe their leader has confidence in their skills.
- Allow for conversations around skills and career development to happen.

Lead by example

- Be the type of leader that employees will want to rally behind.
- Be honest, be communicative, own up to mistakes.
- Be respectful and fair and treat every employee equally.

Five strategies to better motivate your employees

- Communicate: what do your employees want?
 - Talk to your employees to understand what they want.
 - What do they want to gain from work? What motivates them? How could they be better supported at work?
- Create a culture of ownership
 - Make sure your team feel involved in decisions that made.
 - Allow them to participant and ask for their suggestions on how things could be done differently.
- Provide meaning
 - Make sure that employees are aware of the impact of their work.
 - Who is it benefitting? How does it help the organisation overall?
 - When employees know their work matters and it's having an impact, they are more likely to be motivated.
- Creative a positive work environment
 - Employees want to work in an environment where they can be themselves.
 - They want to be able to communicate openly, and provide their input without worrying about the consequences.
 - Think about how you can improve the work culture. Does communication need to be improved? Do employees need to be shown they can be trusted?
- Reward employees for their work
 - Employees want to feel acknowledged, valued, and appropriately rewarded for the work that they do.
 - Think about how you can reward employees/ given them recognition.
 - This external recognition and reward can also act as a bit motivator.

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What are the benefits of employee career development for organisations?

Improved employee engagement

- Employees will be motivated to work towards their targets.
- Work will feel more meaningful to them.
- They will be able to see the positive impact their work will have on their own lives and career goals.

Increased productivity

- Employees are more likely to be productive if they are working toward something that they care about.
- It will give them a clear idea of what they need to do, and they will be able to work faster to achieve it.
- They will take ownership over their work.

Talent retention

- By providing opportunities for development, top talent within the company won't feel the need to look elsewhere.
- Employees will feel like the company is committed to their development.

Improved organisational reputation

- The organisation and leaders within it will become known for supporting their employees and creating top talent.
- This all reflects positive on their abilities as a whole!

Career development: manager and employee roles

An employee's role

Career development is very personal, and every employee has a different idea of what that looks like for them. Ultimately, it is up to the employee to take steps to progress further...

What might these be?

- Communicate with their manager on what their career goals are, and the support that they would like to achieve these.
- Set SMART targets related to career aspirations.
- Identify their areas of strengths, and opportunities for development.

A manager's role

As a manager, your role is to listen, advise, and provide support where necessary. Ultimately, the decision lies in the hands of the employee - they need to be proactive and given the chance to explore opportunities independently, but as a manager you can certainly support.

How can you do this?

- Keep them up to date with opportunities you think are relevant to them.
- Speak to them about their career development plans - help them refine these and make effective goals to help meet their targets.
- Provide training and coaching opportunities for skills development.
- Give regular feedback so they have a chance to improve on existing skills.

Three steps: career development conversations

How can you have career development conversations with your employees that promote proactivity and allow autonomy on their part?

Get to know your employees

Don't be afraid to make suggestions

Share upcoming opportunities

1. Get to know them
 - a. What are their strengths? What work do they enjoy?
 - b. Find out what their motivations are. Where do they see their career going? What do they think they need for this to happen?
2. Don't be afraid to make suggestions
 - a. Once you have an understanding of your employees' strengths and what they want to get out of their role, offer feedback based on your observations and suggest steps they can take to develop e.g. are there particular skills you think they should be working on?
3. Share upcoming opportunities
 - a. Keep an eye out for opportunities that your employees may be interested in or would benefit from.
 - b. Communicate with other teams/department to see if there are perhaps secondment opportunities that may help with further skills development.
 - c. Are there other employees who may be able to provide some insight into what opportunities are available?
 - d. Advocate for your employees - create an environment for them in which they can flourish!