



Employee Engagement **PLAYBOOK**

“To win in the marketplace, you must first win in the workplace.”
—Doug Conant, CEO of Campbell Soup Company

Companies like Google and SAS are frequently praised for their immense investments in food, fun, and fitness opportunities for their employees. Have you ever wondered why, with all the other endeavors that these businesses could pursue, they invest in these things?

The simple answer is because there are a lot of studies that suggest companies that have a highly engaged workforce are twice as successful as those who don't.² As a result, companies spend \$3 billion each year on employee engagement.¹⁰

It seems to be an excellent investment. Research from Gallup shows that “companies with highly engaged workforces outperform their competitors by 147% in earnings per share,” and observes a significant positive correlation between employee engagement and:

- **Customer ratings**
- **Profitability**
- **Productivity**
- **Turnover (both in high-turnover and low-turnover organizations)**
- **Safety incidents**
- **Shrinkage (theft)**
- **Absenteeism**
- **Patient safety incidents**
- **Quality ratings (freedom from defects)**

Research also shows that concentrating on employee engagement can help companies survive, and possibly even thrive, in tough economic times.³

SATISFIED WORKERS VS. MOTIVATED EMPLOYEES VS. ENGAGED EMPLOYEES

Many organizations have programs that hope to drive engagement. One of the most common is conducting an annual survey to gauge employee satisfaction level. But is “employee satisfaction” the same as “employee engagement”?

No, it's not.

There is a stark difference between satisfied, motivated, and engaged employees. Imagine a scenario where an employee of Big Company is offered a job with a competing organization—with a promotion. This is how each kind of employee would respond to the offer.²



A satisfied employee would say: "I am comfortable with my work. The hours are good, the pay is good, I get on well with my colleagues, and my boss lets me do what I want. It's probably too much effort to make a change, so I'll stay with Big Company."

A motivated employee would say: "I just got the promotion and pay raise I requested recently, so at the moment I have a good deal going on. As long as the money and benefits continue to roll in, I am fine! Of course, I have nothing against a little competition, so if they want to sweeten the deal, Big Company will be yesterday's news!"

An engaged employee would say: "No way. I have too much respect for Big Company and what we're trying to achieve. I have the chance to make a real difference here, and I won't stop until I do. So, no thanks. I just had a great idea for how Big Company can save \$50 million in code-reuse and another idea for how we can optimize those long canteen lines...gotta go!"

**SATISFIED****MOTIVATED****ENGAGED**

A highly motivated employee can seem a lot like an engaged employee, which confuses a lot of organizations and people. But they are not the same!

The best example of motivation is how millions of people around the world make New Year Resolutions to go to the gym and get in shape at the beginning of the year. As the newness of each year fades, so does their motivation. When things get difficult, or more appealing options arise, their resolve flags.⁷ That is how a “motivated” employee behaves, too.

Engaged employees, on the other hand, are more like people in committed relationships. Engaged employees value loyalty. When the going gets tough, they buckle down and try to solve the issues at hand—maybe even coming up with more creative ways to create value in their organizations.⁷ Engaged employees are the heart and soul of what makes organizations tick, and in today's economic environment are a coveted competitive advantage.³

Motivated Employees	Engaged Employees
Motivation is a temporary state that can be influenced by rewards	Engagement is a sustainable long-term state that cannot be bought
Motivation and performance is tied to a set of explicit rewards	Engagement and dedication is connected to a value system
Are influenced by external factors	Are self-motivated
Stay until it is favorable for them	Show loyalty towards an organization
Give up when faced with hardships	Keep working despite adversity for the good of the company

HOW DO YOU SPOT AN ENGAGED EMPLOYEE?

For a long time, companies have been trying to gauge personal satisfaction as a proxy for engagement.⁹ But employee happiness isn't entirely the same as employee engagement, i.e., you can have happy employees who aren't engaged.

There are clear signs that can help you spot an engaged employee, however, including:

- 1. They bring new ideas to the workplace**
- 2. They are passionate about the work they do**
- 3. They take the initiative**
- 4. They are constantly thinking of ways to improve themselves and the organization's systems**
- 5. They exceed expectations**
- 6. They are curious to learn new things and ask questions**
- 7. They encourage others and work together as a team**
- 8. They are optimistic, both personally and professionally**
- 9. They smile often and engage with others**
- 10. They are outwardly committed to the organization**

Most importantly, engaged employees feel invested and take ownership in the business. As a result, they do whatever needs to be done to handle problems, save money, and help the business be more profitable and successful.

UNDERSTANDING THE DISENGAGED EMPLOYEE

Contrary to popular belief, a disengaged employee is not just the opposite of an engaged employee. To help encourage employee engagement, it's important to understand how to spot a disengaged employee.

Here are some clear signs that indicate a disengaged employee:⁷

- 1. They exhibit apathy and indifference to their work and colleagues**
- 2. They take no pride in their work**
- 3. They do the least amount of work that they can to get by**
- 4. They do not understand the organization's goals**
- 5. They undermine the organization's goals**
- 6. They intentionally withhold information from other team members**
- 7. They feel little connection to their supervisors, peers, or organization**
- 8. They speak poorly of their team, supervisors, and organization**
- 9. They bad mouth their peers and senior management**

Disengaged employees cost billions of dollars every year. What causes disengaged employees? Research points to one main factor contributing to their disengagement: their supervisors.

Common complaints from disengaged employees about their supervisors include taking credit for employees' work, setting unrealistic expectations, little or no feedback and support, not asking for input, and lack of basic pleasantries like "hello" or "thank you."⁷

Since employee disengagement seems to be mainly a function of the way a supervisor treats his or her employees, it should be obvious to organizations that to combat disengagement (and promote engagement) supervisors should be trained, coached, and supervised to help improve their interactions with their teams.



THE R.E.S.P.E.C.T.™ MODEL⁷

“Respect is not easily earned, but is easily lost.” –Unknown

It is hard to be engaged with an organization that does not value and respect the members of its team. When people feel respected, they work harder towards the goals of an organization. Employee engagement is mainly driven by strong organizational values that promote a culture of respect between peers and managers.

R.E.S.P.E.C.T. is a combination of:⁷

RECOGNITION. Employees need to feel noticed and appreciated; supervisors must be capable of and diligent with regular, earned praise.

EMPOWERMENT. Providing tools, resources, and training empowers employees and sets them up for success.

SUPPORTIVE FEEDBACK. It must be timely, situation specific, and sincere, as well as delivered in a constructive manner, to provide reinforcement and promote improvement.

PARTNERING. Information, inclusion, and communication enable employees to feel ownership of and investment in their work.

EXPECTATIONS. Setting and communicating clear directions, goals, and priorities help employees see and hit their targets.

CONSIDERATION. Thoughtfulness, caring, and consideration have tremendous impact when personal lives intersect with professional lives.

TRUST. Responsible leaders demonstrate trust and are rewarded with it in return.

PUTTING THE R.E.S.P.E.C.T.™ MODEL INTO ACTION⁷

RECOGNITION: Saying “thank you” and showing appreciation is the simplest and most effective way to show you recognize your team's hard work, accomplishments, and professionalism. It helps to reinforce positive behaviors. Writing thank you notes or emails, or verbally expressing thanks for a specific job well done, helps your employees feel appreciated and respected. Contemporaneously documenting good work done by someone also helps management put together year-end performance evaluations.

EMPOWERMENT: Empowering your employees means providing them with the required tools, resources, and training they need for their success. Lack of training and growth opportunities are among the leading reasons employees become disengaged. The more you invest in training people, the better they perform; this in turn helps them to earn others' respect and fit into your organization.

SUPPORTIVE FEEDBACK: The role of supervisors in organizations is to increase the value of your team's “human capital.” One way to do this is by effectively coaching people. In the absence of supportive feedback, performance decreases. Supervisors who respect their team members give them regular feedback in a supportive manner that shows it comes from a place of caring. Give feedback immediately, when it matters the most, so people can do something about it—instead of saving it for annual performance reviews. And don't mix positive and negative feedback together; this dilutes the message and creates confusion.

PARTNERSHIP. In a true partnership, no one cares about who gets the credit for a job well done or focuses on assigning blame for failures. When people work collaboratively towards goals, it reduces the stress on individuals, and greater results are achieved through that synergy. To foster partnerships, make sure you involve people in planning of budget, have cross functional training, and send them regular updates on what is happening in the organization. Technology emails, podcasts, and blogging are some innovative ways to keep your team in the loop.



EXPECTATIONS: Many times people don't reach goals or performance expectations because these are not set out clearly in the first place. Setting expectations begins right from the time someone interviews. Telling them what they will get in terms of training and how long before you will expect full contribution from them sets them up for success. When people achieve goals you lay out for them, it helps them gain confidence and have pride in the work they do—which becomes a driver of respect. Always put measurable goals in writing and set priorities so your team members can set themselves up for success.

CONSIDERATION: A lot of people think empathy and thoughtfulness cannot be taught. But simple, polite, and caring actions like exchanging pleasantries, remembering someone's hobbies, and asking about one's family members go a long way. These efforts show that you value and respect your coworkers and employees and promote loyalty to the team. It can be as simple as asking someone if it is a good time to talk rather than just sitting down in their office, sending an article they'd appreciate, or making an effort to have lunch or coffee together.

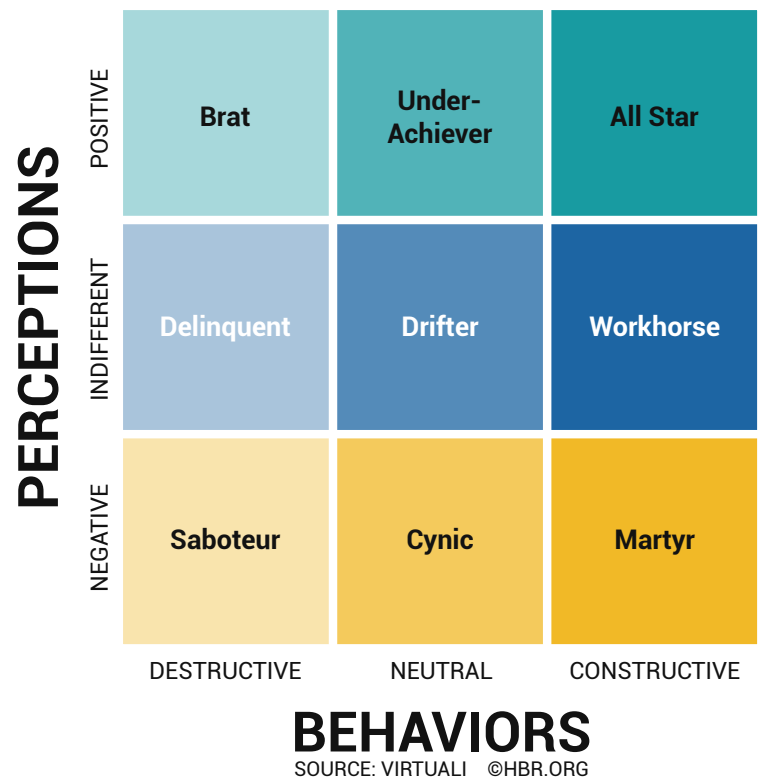
TRUST: When employees trust an organization, they have confidence in the capabilities of the leadership. Engaged employees trust their organization and supervisors more. They also don't worry as much or second-guess their own actions, since they know their supervisors also trust them; this leads to more proactive decision-making and improved productivity. Nothing shows a lack of trust in your team more than **micromanaging: don't do it.** Keep your word and apologize when you can't, and if you don't know something, admit it! This drives more trust than giving half-baked answers. Finally, be more transparent about your policies and over-communicate rather than being cagey. These practices display honesty and build trust.

TAILORING YOUR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS

While an engaged employee might be happy with more autonomy, giving that same level of independence to a disengaged employee wouldn't work. So how do you know which is which and treat them appropriately? How do you measure your employees' engagement levels?

For example, your employee, Jane, has a great attitude towards her managers, work and organization—this puts her in the top, “positive” category. The next step would be to evaluate her work behavior: how much effort does she put in, resulting in a net destructive, neutral, or positive contribution? If her behavior is neutral, i.e., she puts in an average but not impressive amount of effort, then she would be an “underachiever.” The appropriate engagement means to use would be sending her to training to improve.

Use this chart to rate both the attitudes and behaviors of each of your employees.



Using some kind of evaluation that incorporates both attitudes or perceptions and displayed behavior or performance can help give you guidance for how to best respond to and manage the different levels of engagement employees display at work.

STRATEGIC WAYS TO DRIVE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT¹¹

1. Let the supervisors take charge: Employee engagement should be the top priority of senior leadership. They should then bestow the authority and responsibility on supervisors to encourage enthusiasm, energy, and creativity from their employees.

2. Train front line managers: Senior leadership are far off the chain from actually connecting with most of the individual employees in their workforce. Most middle managers, however, lack the training to properly engage employees and give constructive feedback on a regular basis. Provide thorough training to middle managers and supervisors, encouraging them to have productive one-on-ones with their team members.

3. Timely feedback is key: Annual employee surveys fail across the board. They lack the timely responsiveness necessary for employees to take the survey seriously. Instead, conduct organization-wide quarterly surveys as “pulse checks” to find out what can be improved. The dialogue ensuing from these metrics, and the company's responsiveness, will drive engagement better than an annual overview.

4. Asking how they can do better: Organizations can greatly benefit from having regular check-ins with front line sales and support employees. The key, again, lies in actually using the feedback from these interactions: implementing changes in the organization and letting the specific employees know that their ideas effected change in the organization.

ENGAGEMENT IN THE TELECOMMUTING AGE

In a controversial discussion about how telecommuting impacts the prospects of career advancement, business influencer Jack Welch opined that it was a career-killer.

[Telecommuting] says you value lifestyle flexibility over career growth. For anyone who has dreams of leadership in any meaningful way, telecommuting can get you only so far. The road to the top is paved with being there.

A lot of managers are still quite uncertain about how to deal with the changing trends of the workplace, and Jack's opinion illustrates one pervasive perspective. But as the economy and modern workplace shift, organizations are realizing that telecommuting doesn't just support "lifestyle flexibility," it saves companies money—a *lot* of money.

Studies show that if all employees who have jobs that would allow them to work from home did so just *half* the time (roughly the US national average for those who currently do so regularly), the national savings would total over **\$700 billion a year**. And this savings includes \$11,000 in savings per person for the business and \$2000-\$7000 a year for the telecommuting worker. Purely from an economic perspective, businesses should consider implementing a telecommunication option for their employees.¹⁵

Offering a teleworking option can also help promote employee satisfaction, engagement, and retention. 80% to 90% of the US workforce say they would like to telework at least part time. If companies want to listen to and retain their workers, soon nearly every company will have to start offering some kind of telecommuting benefit to their employees. From 2004 to 2015, telecommuting has seen a 6.5% increase.¹⁵ The increase in part-time teleworking options along with the growing prevalence of the “gig economy,” using temporary and off-site workers on a per-job basis, means that today’s managers must learn to engage with remote workers.



THE CHALLENGE OF TELECOMMUTERS

Gallup studies show that across the board, just 31% of workers are “engaged.” This means that companies already find engaging their in-office employees a hard task! The increased prevalence of telecommuting just increases the magnitude of the challenge. Motivating a worker remotely can be difficult, since creating a sense of belonging is very challenging for virtual workers who seem to be all alone out in cyberspace.⁵

Here are some of the ways managers dealing with telecommuting and remote workers can keep engagement high.⁵

Communication: Geography does not matter that much if teams are able to communicate effectively. Especially for remote teams, instant messaging applications and programs that help people engage live and in real time during working hours can help to break down the barrier of not being present in the same location. Different time zones can be another issue. Having online communities and social collaboration software can help bring remote workers together.

Gamification: Adding fun competitions and game playing elements to work environment helps to engage people. If your organization can afford it, game-based performance management systems can help to boost online chatter and collaboration.

Digital accolades: Some online social collaboration tools allow you to give out badges for great work done. Social media platforms like LinkedIn have made it easy to endorse someone you work with for particular skills or write recommendations for a job well done that will remain with your employees for a long time and will be appreciated.

Peer recognition: One key to motivating remote workers is to remember that, like other workers, they crave acknowledgment amongst their peers. Therefore, remember to recognize remote workers in company newsletters, emails, or other communications for their contributions, apart from sending a quick personal note of thanks using whichever instant messaging platforms you use.

REMEMBER ENGAGEMENT IS A TWO-WAY STREET

Since we spend one-third of our lives at work, it is bound to affect other aspects of our life. The spillover and crossover effects that our jobs have affect our personal lives, physical health, children, and relationships. Research shows disengaged employees weigh an average of 5 pounds more than people who are engaged.¹ People unhappy with their bosses are twice as likely to have a stroke or heart attack.¹

Spillover effects affect you more than you think. It is a popular belief that what you do *after* work is what gives direction to your career.¹² But if you come home frustrated due to being disengaged with your work, you hardly have any energy to invest in yourself in order to progress. So take charge of your engagement at work!



RETOOLING YOUR ORGANIZATION FOR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Companies need tools and methods that measure and capture employee feedback and sentiment on a real-time, local basis so they can continuously adjust management practices and the work environment at a local level. These tools include employee feedback systems as well as data analytics systems that help identify and predict factors that lead to low engagement and retention problems.⁸

An integrated HCM system like StarGarden 5.0 can help:

1) Selecting the right people for the job: High-impact organizations have one thing in common: they all hire for culture fit. Recruiting and selecting the right candidate for the job becomes easy by using StarGarden's "Recruitment" functionality. This feature allows you to add the many variables you want to choose from and identify the candidates that best suit your organization.

2) Goals alignment: Having a clear alignment of goals is an important driver of employee engagement. When people have clearly defined goals that are written down and shared freely, everyone feels more comfortable and more work gets done. Goals create alignment, clarity, and job satisfaction—and they have to be revisited and discussed regularly.⁸ StarGarden's "Foundation" technology can help create specific tasks for people and assign them so people have clear ideas of what needs to get done.

3) Leadership development: Succession planning becomes easy when you have a holistic view of the organization's hierarchy. StarGarden's position-based system helps you understand your people and the functions they perform more easily. You can then identify and develop candidates for future leadership positions by enrolling these candidates in leadership and management training and tracking their progress.

4) Performance appraisal: Continuous feedback as and when required is more effective for influencing performance than annual evaluations. StarGarden's flexible platform allows you to design forms and workflows with timely alerts, allowing for a continuous feedback process to be easily implemented in your organization.

5) Focusing on simplicity: Highly engaged companies work very hard to make work simple. Simplicity, or the removal of formal bureaucratic overhead and "red tape," can have a dramatic impact on work satisfaction.⁸ Having a system like StarGarden's 5.0 that is up-to-date with the latest regulations, procedures, and requirements means your employees have to spend less time trying to figure them out.

STARGARDEN CAN HELP

Your employees are your company's greatest asset. Having the right tools to perform their jobs helps drive employee engagement, allowing you to utilize your team's skills and talents most effectively and productively.

Bottom line: Equipping your employees with the tools they need by using StarGarden HCM can help promote employee engagement!

To find out how we can help, contact us.

[Contact Us!](#)



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