

8 WAYS TO DEEPEN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT



Motivated, engaged employees give your business a competitive advantage. And with U.S. employee engagement at a 10-year low,¹ it's not surprising 75% of HR leaders are prioritizing employee engagement.²

To help, we've created this guide with insights and tips for keeping team members challenged, interested, and connected at work.

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1 Conduct Employee Satisfaction Surveys

Survey team members on a regular basis to keep a pulse and understand what helps engagement. Ask about tangible factors, like resources and training opportunities, and socioemotional ones, like being recognized and supported.

Conducting surveys shows employees you value their thoughts, and when you acknowledge and address their concerns, you show you care.

After every survey, it's critical to report the results back to employees and discuss any changes you're making in response.



\$9,300

avg. cost of losing an employee

Paychex, 2025 Priorities for Business Leaders

TIPS

- Set a consistent survey schedule, like monthly or quarterly.
- Aim for a target response rate of at least 70%.
- Alternate brief pulse surveys and more comprehensive assessments.
- Take advantage of [HR software](#) to design surveys, compile responses, analyze feedback, and develop reports.
- Use insights from surveys to identify areas for improvement and prioritize your engagement initiatives.



2 Leverage Performance Management Data and Analytics

Beyond surveys, [HR analytics](#) can help you gauge individual, departmental, and overall company engagement.

Stay ahead of issues by reviewing reports from your talent management platform on a regular basis. Look at markers of engagement, like absenteeism, productivity, and 360° performance review feedback.

If you spot something concerning, address it right away so it doesn't escalate, and use the findings to guide your engagement efforts.

Organizations using advanced people analytics experienced:



McKinsey & Company, People Analytics

TIPS

- Set a cadence for pulling reports to monitor engagement trends, and adjust initiatives when necessary.
- Determine target percentage ranges for key markers like Net Promoter Score (NPS), satisfaction, turnover, and training participation.
- Set notifications in your [HR management platform](#) to alert you about concerning metrics, such as a spike in negative performance review feedback.



3 Celebrate Achievements With Rewards and Recognition

Everyone likes to be recognized for their contributions, so be generous and loud with kudos. Bonuses and raises are great, but public, low-cost and non-monetary gestures can make an impact on both the recipient and their coworkers.

For example, when someone goes above and beyond, reserve a prime parking spot for them and feature their accomplishments on a digital or physical “wall of fame,” in social media, and internal communications.

To drive long-term engagement, consider ongoing contests and challenges. These initiatives help keep people motivated with incentives to earn points and rewards for achievements throughout the year.

67% of employees say praise and commendation are the top motivators for performance.

McKinsey & Company, People Analytics

TIPS

- Gamify appreciation using [employee engagement software](#) with peer recognition features like virtual high-fives, online badges, and a rewards marketplace.
- Incorporate both spontaneous recognition, like spot awards, and scheduled honors, like employee-of-the-month selections.
- Promote collaboration with team performance challenges where the winning team wins a group social activity.



4 Communicate Openly and Consistently

Gallup research shows having a “best friend” at work can make the difference between job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. So set the tone for camaraderie by building trusting relationships through open communication.

Share information consistently and transparently with daily, weekly, or monthly touchpoints. Keep everyone up to date on events, milestones, and business news to strengthen connection to the company and colleagues.

Use multiple channels to accommodate different communication preferences, including internal messaging apps, virtual suggestion boxes, town halls and team meetings, and emails or newsletters.

Beyond company-wide communication, check in on individual employees with scheduled 1:1s and spontaneous chats. Look for “water cooler” moments to catch up, ask and answer questions, and see how you can support your colleagues.

TIPS

- Start meetings with **5-minute check-ins, giving everyone a chance to share.**
- **Schedule communications to avoid overload and respect working hours when sending emails and IMs.**
- Explore [HR technology](#) with interactive social dashboards and workplace collaboration tools to promote dialogue across the company.

85% of employees

say they engaged when leaders communicate transparently.

SHRM Labs, Building a Connected Workforce: Key Insights on Employee Engagement



5 Transform Performance and Goal Management

Managers directly shape engagement — Gallup studies show they influence up to 70% of an employee’s experience. But many spend their time on administrative tasks instead of developing their team members.

[Employee engagement and performance management solutions](#) can help. When managers automate administrative work, they free up time for coaching and planning.

With the right platform, managers and employees collaborate to set meaningful goals, document coaching conversations, and gather continuous performance feedback.

Employees benefit from gaining visibility into how their work advances company objectives, accessing self-directed learning paths, and recognizing peers for contributions. This helps them feel more invested in their work.

TIPS

- Provide manager training on using automation tools to reduce administrative time and engage employees.
- Develop and communicate goals together with employees so everyone is clear on what they’re working toward.
- Implement a [mobile-friendly engagement platform](#) that motivates employees with goal tracking and peer recognition.



70% of the variance in team engagement is determined solely by the manager.

Gallup, Engagement and Retention Start with Your Leaders’ Behavior and What is Employee Engagement and How Do You Improve It?



6 Support Wellbeing with Employee Assistance Programs

If your employee surveys, 1:1s, and office buzz suggest work-related stress is an issue, address the problems right away.

For example, if workloads are heavy, explore project management and automation tools to create efficiencies. Or hire temporary help to get through a busy period. (AI-assisted recruiting may help you find qualified candidates fast.)

Personal stress may be harder to pick up on but can impact performance at work. So stay connected with team members and watch for warning signs like increased errors, changes in behavior, withdrawal, or not showing up for meetings.

Remind employees about resources for physical and emotional support. An [employee assistance program](#) (EAP) is a confidential service that connects employees to assessments, short-term counseling, referrals, and follow-up services.

TIPS

- Look into offering a voluntary [financial wellness benefit](#) to help reduce stress around money.
- Provide mental health first-aid training and resources for managers.
- Reduce stigma around mental health by having leaders talk candidly about their vulnerabilities and experiences.

94% The percentage of employers who rated mental health benefits as **“very important”** in 2024.

Lyra, 2025 State of Workforce Mental Health Report

7 Perk Up Employee Lifestyle Benefits

Since every employee wants and needs different benefits, offer a range of flexible options to help them all stay healthy and focused. This is especially important in [multigenerational workforces](#) with employees in all stages of life.

Start by surveying your employees about benefits. Ask them to rank the possible options. Then compare your offerings to what your team members want. Think of it as a gap analysis and use the findings to guide your employee benefits strategy.

Most workers prioritize medical insurance and 401(k), but some might also want identity theft protection, memberships in discount programs, or access to supplementary [health and lifestyle products](#).

Once you've tailored the benefit options, decide how you'll administer them. Research and compare benefits administration technologies and professional employer organizations (PEOs) to find the most valuable packages for your employees.

TIPS

- **Include questions about benefits in your employee engagement surveys to keep up with what people want.**
- **Use AI tools to benchmark your benefits against industry and market standards.**
- **Communicate the monetary value of benefits to employees so they understand their total compensation.**
- **Measure utilization with your benefits administration platform and satisfaction through employee surveys. Refer to the information when making decisions about future benefit offerings.**

Which benefits are most important to employees?



health insurance



401(k) retirement plan



life insurance

Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies, Emerging From the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Employer's Perspective



8 Invest in Training and Development

Investing in learning and professional development is a win-win: you keep team members challenged and engaged — and you gain more-skilled employees.

Training comes in many forms and there are options for every company's budget. You can connect with an educational institution, trade association, online education provider, or e-learning platform, and even develop your own [learning management system](#) (LMS).

Since your employees have different learning styles, career goals, and availability, support a range of opportunities that allow them to develop the skills they need in the way that works best.

Consider certificate programs; individual coaching; conferences and seminars; and self-paced, live, online and in-person classes. And try to fit training into the regular workflow so it doesn't become a burden.

TIPS

- **Integrate an LMS into your employee engagement app to automate enrollment, track progress, and sync with goal setting and performance reviews.**
- **Keep people motivated to learn by celebrating progress such as getting a high grade, completing a module, or earning a certificate.**
- **Measure the ROI of your investments by looking for improved engagement metrics.**

80%

of employees say learning provides a sense of purpose at work.

LinkedIn, Workplace Learning Report

70%

of employees say learning improves their connection with their company.

LinkedIn, Workplace Learning Report

76%

of employees are more likely to stay at a company that offers continuous training.

SHRM, Workplace Learning & Development Trends report



Prioritize Engagement and Profits Will Follow

Contact Paychex today to see how our all-in-one HR technology makes it easier and more cost-effective to prioritize employee engagement — and drive profits.

[GET STARTED](#)

¹Gallup, U.S. Employee Engagement Sinks to 10-Year Low.

²Paychex, 2023 Pulse of HR.