

**EBOOK**

# **Playbook for addressing engagement issues**

# Why engagement matters

Employee engagement is a form of people data that indicates how your employees feel about working for you.

But all too often, employee engagement is labeled an HR issue—not a critical business concern.

With the tightest job market in years and Salary.com estimating a 19.3% average turnover rate across industries, engagement is a topic everyone in your organization needs to be talking about—especially the C-Suite.

Turning a blind eye to disengagement is costly, both in dollars and in reputation. Disengagement causes employees to withhold the discretionary effort that results in maximum productivity necessary for your business to reach peak performance. In fact, according to some studies, disengagement costs U.S. businesses [\\$483 billion to \\$605 billion](#) each year in lost productivity.

It's clear: Addressing disengagement needs to be a company-wide initiative.

In this e-book, you'll learn how to address engagement through a talent optimization lens, so you can diagnose your organization's people problems and create a practical action plan to resolve them.

# The four factors of employee engagement

Research conducted and outlined in the [2019 Annual Employee Engagement Report](#) found there are four key variables impacting employee engagement: job, manager, team, and organization.

- **Job:** When positions are poorly defined, the hiring process doesn't take behavioral alignment into account—and/or growing business needs morph a role into something new—poor job fit can result. This lack of job fit impacts motivation and productivity, ultimately leading to disengagement.
- **Manager:** The relationship between an employee and their manager plays a critical role in engagement. But if managers aren't adequately trained, or if they don't know how to tailor their managerial style to support each of their direct reports, distrust can result. This lowering of trust causes employees to disengage.
- **Team:** Who an employee works with also impacts engagement. Team-based work is more critical than ever, yet poor communication, insufficient collaboration, and the inability to manage the tensions inherent to teamwork continue to extract a massive tax on productivity and innovation.
- **Organization:** Nine of the top 10 drivers of turnover intent related to the organization. If employees aren't aligned with organizational values, senior leaders aren't trustworthy or transparent, or the work environment is toxic, productivity and performance suffer.



## YOUR ENGAGEMENT PLAYBOOK

# Diagnose your people problems.

In order to address engagement issues in your workplace, you first need to know what they are. This diagnosis can be accomplished using employee engagement surveys, behavioral and cognitive assessments, job performance data, and employee sentiments gathered from exit interviews or anonymous employee review sites, such as [Glassdoor](#).

Once your data is collected and measured, look at it through your business context. Look for patterns. Are multiple people reporting the same problems? How much are these issues impacting your business in terms of morale, productivity, and performance? Was this problem flagged by high performers or low performers? Your primary focus should be on addressing widespread issues significantly impacting your company and holding back your top performers.

For a more in-depth look at diagnosing people problems, [download this e-book](#).

The best way to tackle potential engagement issues is to get ahead of them. Be proactive. Keep a constant pulse on engagement data. Be intentional about how you hire, manage, train, and equip your employees and managers. Ensure your organizational policies reflect your core values and decisions are made through the lens of what's needed to achieve your business goals. By maintaining a proactive approach, you can address issues as they arise and before they start seriously impacting engagement.

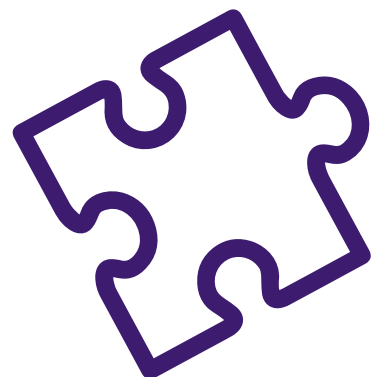
## 4 ways to address poor job fit

Poor job fit can be avoided when you have the right people data in hand. Here are a few ways to avoid misalignment:

- **Be intentional about your hiring practices.** Collect people data during the hiring process to ensure a candidate is the right behavioral and cognitive fit for the role. Leveraging objective data in the form of assessments can help you gain this insight.
- **Conduct regular 1:1 and personal development meetings.** Managers should meet with their direct reports on a recurring basis to discuss blockers, professional development, and career growth. Because roles are ever-changing, it's imperative to maintain open communication. These meetings help managers and employees course-correct if a job starts to evolve outside the employee's capacity.
- **Create opportunities for career advancement.** One of the top 10 drivers of turnover intent is lack of career growth opportunities. If employees feel they have nothing to aspire to—whether that's a new skill or a promotion—they'll disengage from their work. Offer learning and development opportunities for your employees in the form of skills training or cross-functional projects.

If an employee is already experiencing poor job fit, try this tactic:

- **Audit roles.** Compare an employee's current responsibilities to those they were originally hired to perform. Have a candid conversation with the employee and acknowledge the changes. This will build trust so you can have a productive conversation about the role and align on whether they're still the right person for the job. If they're no longer a good fit, candidly explore other options within the organization or support them in finding a job elsewhere if no other internal options are a fit.



# 5 ways to address poor manager fit

Here are some practical ways to avoid management-related engagement issues:

- **Communicate the bigger picture.** Employees need to understand the impact of their work. Tie their roles and responsibilities into your organization's mission and values. Even better, bring in a client or customer to share how they've been impacted by working with your organization.
- **Establish clear goals and expectations.** Lack of role clarity leads to poor results and disengagement. By setting clear goals and expectations, you're also better able to hold employees accountable to outcomes and timelines.
- **Acknowledge a job well done.** A little recognition goes a long way. Show your employees you appreciate the work they do, and create opportunities to celebrate those wins. This could be a simple shout-out in a meeting or a quarterly celebration with a prize or award.

If you've already identified managerial misalignment as a challenge, consider these two strategies:

- **Ask for feedback.** Even the most self-aware leaders have blind spots. Be open to receiving feedback from anyone and everyone—especially your employees—and leave your ego at the door. Perception is often more important than intention when it comes to management. You can collect feedback one-on-one or through an anonymous survey.
- **Tailor your management style.** It's natural for different personality types to clash. Learn how each of your employees is wired and identify potential areas of conflict, then create a plan for how you'll tailor your communications and management style to fit each individual on your team.

Learn how you can become a better manager with a custom [manager development chart](#).



# 4 ways to address poor team fit

Misunderstandings, in-fighting, and politics can quickly breed disengagement. Here's how to get ahead of it:

- **Use people data to foster self-awareness and understanding.** Objective data about how teammates are driven, motivated, think, and work are key to creating a culture of self-awareness. Being self-aware and knowing how best to work with others will result in improved communication, accountability, and collaboration.
- **Normalize healthy conflict.** Conflict is natural amongst teams—and it doesn't have to be negative! Done well, it can be healthy. To have healthy conflict, you must foster an environment of trust. Trust will encourage transparency, leading to healthy conflict that generates better results.

If you've already established there are engagement issues related to how people work with one another, try these strategies:

- **Support employees in resolving interpersonal conflict.** Acknowledge the interpersonal issues at play and illustrate how they're negatively impacting the team and organization. It's never fun to have these tough conversations, but if left unacknowledged, they'll worsen and deteriorate culture. Help employees to understand how they're each wired and how that might be contributing to their conflict.
- **Conduct a team-building session.** It's crucial for teammates to trust one another. Without trust, the team will never grow to its full potential. Conduct a team-building day to strengthen bonds, break down barriers, share common challenges, and resolve issues.

Navigate team dynamics better with [this e-book](#).



# 5 ways to address poor organizational fit

The organization has the greatest overall impact on engagement. Use these strategies to boost engagement at the organizational level:

- **Create a mission, vision, and values your organization stands behind.** These will help codify your organizational culture and inform which behaviors are rewarded and how policies are created. Once your mission, vision, and values are created, communicate them regularly.
- **Foster transparency from top to bottom.** When employees don't understand why something was done, they often make assumptions. Use your best judgment to determine which decisions and decision-making processes need to be communicated openly.
- **Invest in your people.** When employees feel the organization cares about their personal and professional development, they're more engaged. Take a look at your compensation and benefits, employee appreciation activities, team-building events, and learning and development initiatives to ensure you're appropriately investing in your people.

If your culture's under water, here are a few ways to right the ship:

- **Identify and acknowledge missteps.** It's never easy to admit fault, but the best leaders take ownership of their actions—even the ones with poor results. Think back: What decisions were made in the last six months that may have impacted engagement? This could be anything from changes in compensation models to an acquisition or change in benefits. Admit your mistake and share what you plan to do to correct the situation.
- **Shore up your leadership team.** Make sure your leadership team is aligned with your business strategy and are well-rounded as leaders. Consider pairing up leaders to mentor each other in areas of weakness.

See if your executive team is aligned with your business strategy using the [Strategy Insights tool](#).





# Take action.

## Step 1: Assess

- Collect and measure employee engagement data.
- Analyze and look for trends.
- Bucket feedback into the key areas of job, manager, team, and organization.
- Identify spheres of influence in impacted areas. (Note: If your analysis extends beyond your team, loop in the appropriate parties for context and action planning.)

## Step 2: Plan

- Choose which engagement issues you'd like to address and set a goal for improvement.
- Determine the best course of action to reach that goal.
- Make a list of action items and a timeline for implementation.
- Anticipate and proactively address employees who may have a natural resistance to the change.

## Step 3: Execute

- Share your plan. Increase accountability and make sure people know what you're doing to improve engagement.
- Execute on your action plan. Follow-through is critical in turning around engagement issues.
- Follow up to ensure actions are taken in a timely manner and to gauge the impact of your efforts on engagement levels.

# Get your engagement score.

Take our engagement diagnostic and see how your company rates on a scale of 1-100.

[GET YOUR SCORE](#)