

Insights...

TIPS TO MAKE THE BENEFIT DIFFERENCE



Strategies for Driving Employee Engagement



Many of the employers we speak with at Vertus are looking for ways to increase employee engagement. However, few have a good handle on whether their employees are currently engaged, what an engaged workforce looks like, or how to achieve improved engagement levels.

While engagement is a priority for these employers, some rely solely on employee satisfaction surveys to measure the engagement level of their employees, while others have given up, believing that if they do the right things, their employees will feel more engaged.

ENGAGEMENT has many definitions depending on where one falls on the benefits delivery continuum. For a life insurance carrier, it could mean that employees understand the need to actively assess life insurance needs and purchase the equivalent amount of coverage.

For a digital solutions firm, it may mean that employees are utilizing tools that are provided to help team members better manage the customer challenges their employer's solutions are intended to answer. In these scenarios, engagement is measured by employee participation.

FOR EMPLOYERS, though, understanding and measuring employee engagement is far more complex. It is defined as how enthusiastic and committed, both emotionally and psychologically, employees are to their work, their co-workers, and their workplace. The behaviors associated with engagement include taking ownership of responsibilities, driving performance, encouraging innovation, and actively going above and beyond to propel the company toward success.

Studies show that employers with higher levels of employee engagement have significantly higher productivity, profitability, and customer ratings, and less turnover, absenteeism, and fewer safety incidents than their peers with lower levels of engagement.

For over 25 years, Vertus has helped companies identify opportunities to improve employee engagement

It's best to start with a baseline employee engagement survey.

These surveys tend to be very short, but focused. Prior to the survey, as well as on an ongoing basis, communication to employees is critical and should highlight the organization's goal to provide a productive and rewarding workplace environment for every employee.

Once the survey is complete and has been analyzed, it's important to share the results with the survey participants and identify actionable opportunities that align with your company's culture.

At a high level, those opportunities may come in the way of:



COMMUNICATION

Effectively communicate your organization's mission and values.

Help employees understand your customers' needs, preferences, and expectations, as well as their role in creating organizational outcomes that are consistent with organizational goals.



TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Provide essential tools for improved job performance. These tools can include physical equipment, resources, and access to knowledge. Work to ensure the right people are in the right jobs. Create easy-to-access knowledge libraries.



EMOTIONAL BONDING

Create cross-functional teams focused on meeting single goals.

Encourage professional interaction throughout the organization.

Sponsor activities that extend to employees' families, such as picnics, athletic events, and voluntary community service.



BENEFITS

Allow flexible work schedules and remote work arrangements where appropriate. Provide workplace perks, sound employee and family-friendly benefits that are responsive to the needs of your organization's diverse population. Incorporate an element of fun into the work environment.



FEEDBACK AND GROWTH

Get aligned with employees on what their strengths are and create a plan that focuses on developing their biggest strengths. Set goals and targets so they continue to feel challenged.

Increase direct contact between direct team leaders and their subordinates through formal and informal work-focused dialogue. Ideally, the dialogue should take place weekly, and last 5-10 minutes.

Assign mentors to facilitate a "best friend at work" employee support model.

While improving engagement levels within employee populations requires transformational work effort, the return on investment is exponential both for the organization and for the individual employees.

Helping you create a culture of engagement

Like employee populations overall, engagement results are diverse geographically, by gender, generation, tenure, job classification, and educational achievement. In order to compete for talent across the diverse spectrum, many employers offer perks, only to find that while the perks may contribute to increased employee satisfaction, they are not a viable substitute for employee engagement. In the best environments, employers offer opportunities and support for engagement and perks that address the needs of each of the diverse employee populations.



Engaged employees understand the direct correlation between their work and their organization's success.

Employee Engagement by the Numbers

30%
of the U.S. workforce
is engaged in their work.

70%
are either not engaged (52%),
or actively disengaged (18%)

**\$450-
550B** each year in lost
productivity is
attributed to lack
of engagement

41-62%
lower health-related costs
among engaged workers

As reported by Gallup's State of the American Workplace, only 30% of the U.S. workforce is engaged in their work. The remaining 70% are either not engaged (52%), or actively disengaged (18%). It is estimated that the actively disengaged employees cost the U.S. between \$450 - \$550 billion each year in lost productivity, while engaged employees are generally more productive and in better health than their unengaged or actively disengaged counterparts. In fact, employees who are engaged and have a high level of wellbeing have between 41% - 62% lower health-related costs than employees who are not engaged or actively disengaged.

According to Gallup, the most successful companies integrate employee engagement into the following areas:

- Strategy and Leadership Philosophy
- Accountability and Performance
- Communication and Knowledge Management
- Development and Ongoing Learning Opportunities



Engagement strategies are more than another employee relations initiative. A key principle behind effective employee engagement strategies is the realization that, in order to maximize outcomes, the strategy should be embraced and supported by the CEO and every level of management.

Chances are you've already started down the path of creating a culture of engagement and have discovered that it can be a lot of work requiring organizational alignment, persistency, focus, clarity, and communication.

The good news is that employees, even in the least engaged organizations, are eager to connect – with their work responsibilities, the other people in their organization, and with the organization's mission, vision, and commitment to its customers.

Please let us know if you would like to further discuss any element of building a highly engaged workforce. We are here to help!

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