



WHITEPAPER

ISSUE 4 / NOVEMBER 2018



# EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: WHAT MOTIVATES EXCELLENCE?

# EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: WHAT MOTIVATES EXCELLENCE?

Former Campbell's Soup CEO, Douglas Conant, once said, "I strongly believe that you can't win in the marketplace unless you first win in the workplace. If you don't have a winning culture inside, it's hard to compete in the very tough outside world."

What Conant said is true. Success comes from within; within the workplace and within ourselves. Companies win when their employees are engaged; when they give their best each day; when they're motivated to contribute to an organization's success by succeeding in their own individual jobs; when they go above and beyond their normal duties to accomplish tasks; when they want to learn more and do more; and when they enjoy an enhanced sense of well-being.

## WHITEPAPER

ISSUE 4 / NOVEMBER 2018



800 535.8285  
[www.4-m.com](http://www.4-m.com)

# ENGAGED EMPLOYEES ARE EMOTIONALLY COMMITTED TO THEIR COMPANY.

They actually care about their job. The more emotionally committed an employee is, the more he or she puts in the extra effort, the “discretionary effort,” it takes to go above and beyond, and as a result allow their company to succeed and gain a competitive advantage. Engaged employees don’t just work for a paycheck; they work to help achieve their company’s goals.

Leadership guru Simon Sinek, who is known for encouraging people and brands to find their ‘why’ wisely states: “Working hard for something we don’t care about is called stress; working hard for something we love is called passion.”

When employees feel passionate about what they’re doing; if they feel they have found a purpose, are making a difference and are valued by management—*if they have found their why*—they are going to work harder and stay with a company longer.



# WHAT EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IS NOT!

On the flip side, and to gain an even deeper perspective on what employee engagement is, let's look at what it is not.

1. Employee engagement is not SATISFACTION. Employees can be satisfied with their job and working environment and content with their pay and still not be engaged. Satisfaction is necessary for engagement but it does not make a person passionate.
2. Employee engagement is not HAPPINESS. An employee can be happy in a 'fun' working environment or at a low-stress job, but not be truly engaged with their work at all.
3. Employee engagement is not MOTIVATION. Motivation is simply energy put toward completing a task or action. Motivation, as opposed to enthusiasm, gets results. Employees can be motivated to do their job well because they want to get paid but they might not be excited about it. Engaged employees are motivated but motivated employees are not necessarily engaged.

And although a recent [Gallup poll](#) shows that employee engagement is on the rise, at 34 percent, the percentage of disengaged employees is still a whopping 53 percent. The 53 percent represents employees who are generally satisfied at work but not cognitively and emotionally connected and would easily jump ship for a better offer.

And, a [study](#) shows that 91 percent of Millennials who make up [over a third](#) of the U.S. workforce plan on staying at a job for less than three years before moving on.

According to an [article in Inc. magazine](#), "Benefits and salary are expectations for Millennials. Millennials aren't interested in simply filling a job. Instead, they want meaning, strong company culture, and extraordinary experiences at work."

"Millennials don't look to corporations for job security. Instead, they recognize that their networks and skills will provide any security and stability they seek. This new shift redirects the responsibility of the organization to deliver a place where folks want to show up instead of where they have to."



# THE IMPACT OF ENGAGEMENT

Clearly, engaged employees are better employees. They are invested in their work, go the extra mile and stick around longer than those employees who just show up every day to do their job. And there is a definite link between engagement and performance. In fact, [Gallup](#) estimates that companies with engaged employees outperform the competition by as much as 202 percent, while disengaged employees cost the U.S. between \$450-\$550 billion each year in productivity loss.

The advantages of engaging employees include:

- Absenteeism (41% lower)
- Turnover (59% lower)
- Employee safety incidents (70% fewer)
- Productivity (17% higher)
- Sales (20% higher)
- Profitability (21% higher)

Beyond these measurable statistics, high employee engagement also has a great impact on the following:

- Creativity and innovation
- Quality of products and services
- Self image and reputation
- Motivation
- Team spirit
- Employee well-being

So what does it take to encourage commitment and keep employees engaged for the long haul?

In his 2009 New York Times bestseller, [“Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us,”](#) author Daniel H. Pink examines what he considers the three elements of true intrinsic or internal motivation—**autonomy** (the desire to be self-directed), **mastery** (the need to keep improving at something that is important to us) and **purpose** (the sense that what we do serves something more meaningful than ourselves).

Let’s delve a little deeper into Pink’s three elements and see how companies might use these motivators to engage their employees more fully.

# AUTONOMY: THE NEED TO DIRECT YOUR OWN LIFE AND WORK

An article in [Entrepreneur](#) magazine summed this up quite nicely: “Autonomy is one of the essential elements in building true employee engagement. Without it your workforce may become the ‘land of the working dead,’ roaming endlessly in zombie-like fashion, waiting to be told what to do next. Not an enjoyable workplace for employees nor managers, by any stretch.”

A comment from an employee engagement survey Entrepreneur conducted with a large retail chain echoed this sentiment: “I really enjoy it when my manager yells at me in her shrill voice, constantly telling me what to do and how to do it. It makes me want to work harder.”

## WHAT CAN COMPANIES DO?

Jack Welch, the former CEO of General Electric, and one of the greatest business leaders of this century, understood the value of giving employees the autonomy to do their jobs. “Communicate your ideas, distribute the resources and get out of the way,” he said.

Here are 3 ways for managers to encourage autonomy in the workplace:

1. **Give Recognition.** Recognition is a powerful motivator for boosting engagement, increasing retention and improving overall morale. In fact, studies show that [78% of employees say](#) being recognized motivates them to work harder and with more drive.

[Forbes magazine](#) reports that in a study by Harvard Medical School and conducted by researchers at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, fundraisers who received a pep talk from the director of annual giving, who said she was grateful for their efforts made 50% more fundraising calls than those fundraisers who did not receive a message of gratitude.

Building a culture of recognition within your organization can be as simple as a handshake, pat on the back, or thank you for a job well done. Or it can be done on a grander scale, such as implementing an employee recognition and rewards program. Either way, recognizing an employee’s good work is one of the strongest ways to encourage engagement.

“PRAISE THE SLIGHTEST IMPROVEMENT, AND PRAISE EVERY IMPROVEMENT.” —DALE CARNEGIE

2. **Build Trust.** When employers send the message that they trust employees with their time and efforts, it makes autonomy possible for the employees. Without trust, autonomy is impossible. Trust and autonomy are intertwined. Managers who trust employees offer their employees more flexibility and responsibility. And when employees feel they can make choices on balancing their work and home life, they are more likely to be productive, happier and engaged.

But trust is also a two-way street. Employees need to be able to trust that their managers have their best interests at heart and are transparent with them. They need to feel that their employer is open and accessible and should not be afraid to communicate, ask questions, suggest changes and recommend improvements.

Good managers are mentors, not micromanagers. They communicate optimism and promote team spirit. They know when to delegate and when to trust their employees with new tasks. They also show an interest in their employees' personal lives.

EMPLOYEES ARE MORE ENGAGED  
IF THEY FEEL THEIR MANAGERS  
CARE ABOUT THEIR LIVES OUTSIDE  
OF WORK AND UNDERSTAND  
HOW THAT CAN AFFECT JOB  
PERFORMANCE. —DALE CARNEGIE

3. **Give Ownership.** Fostering open and honest communication by offering employees the opportunity to share opinions, exchange viewpoints and discuss decisions makes employees feel that management values their thoughts and ideas. This in turn can lead to greater degrees of engagement. A study by the [Dale Carnegie Institute](#) found that 60% of people that feel they have an impact on the direction of a company are engaged.

Encouraging employee initiative by allowing employees a more active role in problem solving will also lead to feelings of autonomy and satisfaction. It also frees up managers to devote more time to leadership tasks.

What are some ways employers can encourage employee initiative?

- Keep the lines of communication open; be transparent with deadlines, difficulties and problems.
- Really listen to employees' ideas and concerns and make clear that you are interested in acting upon their suggestions.
- Give frequent and objective feedback.
- Offer training when an employee wants to improve his or her performance or learn a new skill.

LEADERSHIP IS THE ART OF GIVING  
PEOPLE A PLATFORM FOR SPREADING  
IDEAS THAT WORK. —SETH GODIN



# MASTERY: THE DESIRE TO IMPROVE

We all want to get better at things, whether it's learning a new language, improving our golf swing, finessing that recipe, or mastering a skill at work. Getting better or becoming the best at something is an intrinsic motivator, and believe it or not, it's a more effective motivator than free lunches or dress down Fridays. A sense of progress keeps us engaged at the task at hand. Author Daniel Pink says that employers who assign "[Goldilocks tasks](#)", tasks that are neither too difficult or too easy, but just right, allow their employees to reach a little higher without feeling frustrated. Employees who have been given the opportunity to increase their knowledge and master new skills will not get bored and will be more present and engaged with their work.

## WHAT CAN COMPANIES DO?

Abraham Lincoln once said, "Give me six hours to chop down a tree, and I'll spend the first four sharpening the axe."

What Lincoln was saying is that only by perfecting your skills beforehand (sharpening the axe), can you truly succeed. A lumberjack with a dull axe will never do a good job. Learning before doing is key.

Here are 4 ways to help employees to perfect their skills and achieve mastery in the workplace:

1. **Offer a stimulating work environment.** Encourage employees to have innovative minds, to collaborate and to participate in new projects outside of their normal routine.
2. **Give employees the tools they need to "sharpen their axe."** Make sure they have the resources they need to do their jobs well, avoid frustration and burnout, as well as the training they need to improve and learn new skills.
3. **Recognize improvement.** Recognition is one of the most powerful motivators. When an employee takes on the task of learning something new or mastering a skill, be sure to give him or her the recognition they so rightly deserve.
4. **Reward achievement.** When an employee masters a skill, make sure you reward that achievement visibly so all employees can see that having initiative makes a difference.

# PURPOSE:

## INVESTING IN THE “BIG PICTURE”

You can't fake purpose. It's what gets you up and going each morning. It's what makes you want to do your very best. It's the highest level of motivation and it's what truly engages employees to the utmost. Author Daniel Pink says that purpose is “connecting to a cause larger than yourself that drives the deepest motivation.” Having a purpose or a “why” as Simon Sinek would say, is being able to see the big picture and feeling invested in an outcome.

Employees who feel connected to the mission of an organization, who feel that their visions and goals align with their company's visions and goals, who feel their work is a “calling” more than just a “job”, were more likely to go the extra mile without thinking twice.

### WHAT CAN COMPANIES DO?

1. **Clearly communicate the company's mission.**

It's up to the leaders of an organization to clearly communicate to employees the company's values, goals and overall mission.

A 2018 study by [Deloitte](#) showed a negative shift in Millennials' feelings about business's motivations and ethics. Today, only 48% (65% in 2017) believe businesses behave ethically and that 47% believe business leaders are committed to helping improve society (62% in 2017).

2. **Make sure employees know the value of their contribution.** Each employee should understand exactly how his or her individual role plays a part and contributes to the overall mission of an organization. They need to see the bigger picture and understand how even the most

tedious of tasks helps the company to succeed. Method acting creator Constantine Stanislavski said, “There are no small parts, only small actors.” Employees need to see the big part even a small role can play.

3. **Talk about the positive impact the company is having on its customers and the community.**

Employees need to feel connected to the good their company is doing and the positive impact their company is having on real lives. At Disney Amusement Parks, employees are told that whatever the *function* of their job, the *purpose* of their job is to “spread happiness.” That purpose helps them to see the real difference they can make every day.

Creating a culture of engagement in an organization offers employees autonomy, mastery and purpose, and that in turn boosts productivity and profits. When employees look forward to coming to work every day, when they feel they can reach their full potential, when they understand how their individual cog fits into the company wheel, when they feel aligned with their company's mission, that is when the magic happens. That is when a company truly succeeds.

IN THE EARLY 1960S, WHEN PRESIDENT JOHN KENNEDY CASUALLY ASKED A JANITOR AT A NASA SITE HE WAS VISITING WHAT HIS JOB WAS, THE JANITOR SAID, "I AM HELPING TO PUT A MAN ON THE MOON." THE JANITOR SAW THE PURPOSE OF HIS JOB AS MUCH BIGGER THAN THE TASK AT HAND.



**At 4M Building Solutions, we take great pride in our Team Members and have put them first in everything we do for the past 40 years. Maybe that's why our turnover rate currently averages only 87.76 percent companywide, well below the current industry average of 256 percent. Our employees' dedication, can-do attitude and professionalism have made 4M the absolute best building services partner in the industry. [Contact us](#) to learn more.**