

GALLUP®

State of the American Workplace

U.S. EMPLOYEES

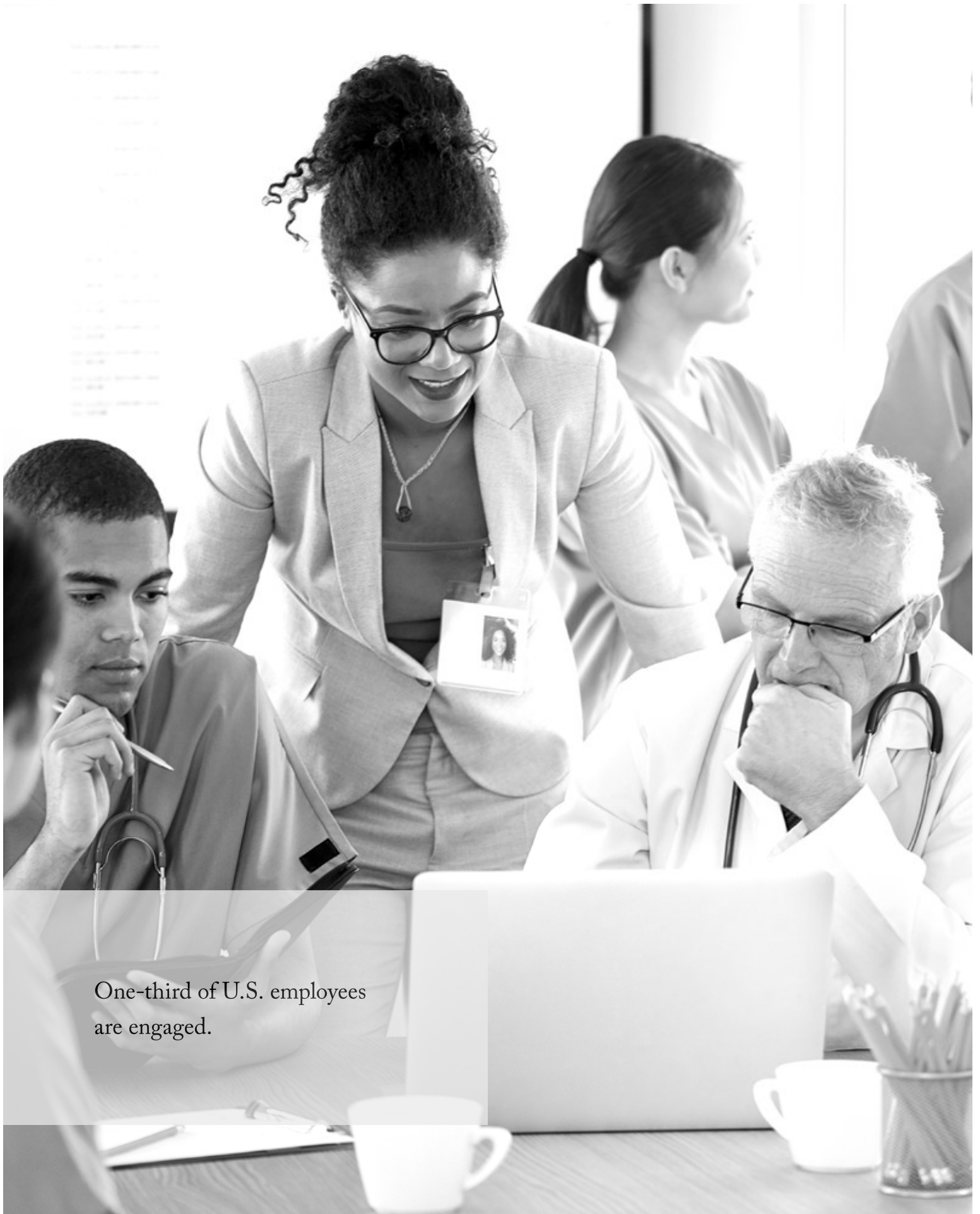
WORLD'S BEST
ORGANIZATIONS

33% vs. 70%

ARE ENGAGED AT WORK



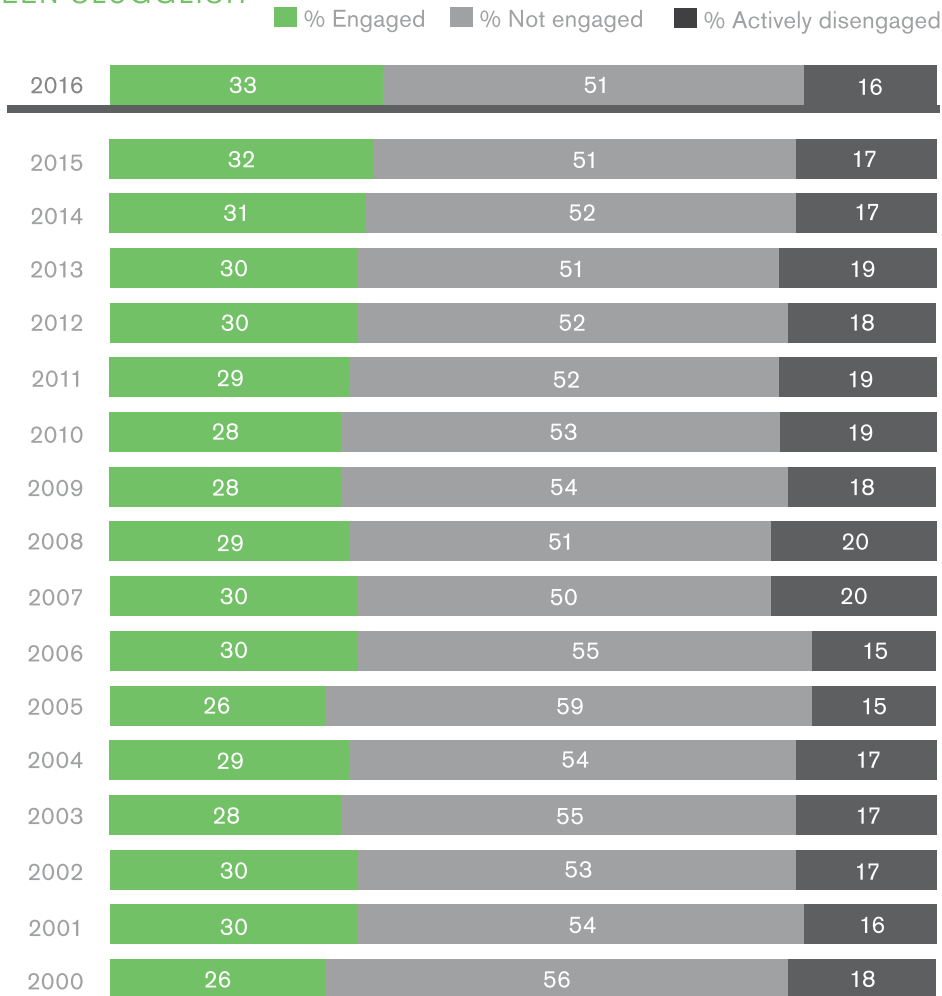
The Competitive Advantage of Engaging Employees



One-third of U.S. employees
are engaged.

IN 2016, 33% OF U.S. EMPLOYEES were engaged — involved in, enthusiastic about and committed to their work and workplace. The latest number is the highest in Gallup's 15-plus years of tracking employee engagement. But it's not quite cause for celebration. The majority of employees (51%) are not engaged and haven't been for quite some time. Employee engagement has barely budged over the past decade and a half. At times, the metric has stagnated, and at other times, it has even retreated. From 2012 to 2016, employee engagement increased by just three percentage points. The U.S. — and the world at large — is in the midst of an employee engagement crisis.

IMPROVEMENTS IN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT HAVE BEEN SLUGGLISH



Note: 2016 data are for U.S. employees through September 2016.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: A PRIMER

Gallup measures employee engagement using a 12-element survey (Gallup's Q¹²) rooted in employees' performance development needs. When those needs are met, employees become emotionally and psychologically attached to their work and workplace. As a result, their individual performance soars, and they propel their team and organization to improved crucial outcomes such as higher levels of productivity, safety and quality.

THE Q¹² IS BASED ON FOUR TYPES — OR LEVELS — OF EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS:

1. basic needs
2. individual needs
3. teamwork needs
4. personal growth needs

Employees need to be equipped to perform and then positioned for individual and team success. The first, second and third levels create an environment of trust and support that enables managers and employees to get the most out of the fourth level.

These levels provide a roadmap for managers to motivate and develop their team members and improve the team members' performance, with each level building on the previous.

For example, employees may feel connected to their team members, but if, among other challenges, they don't know what's expected of them (a basic need), don't have the appropriate materials and equipment (a basic need), or are not able to do what they do best (an individual need), their affiliation with their team members is unlikely to have a positive impact on their performance. Instead, time spent with their peers may more closely resemble a gripe session than productive teamwork.

GALLUP'S Q¹²

■ BASIC NEEDS ■ INDIVIDUAL NEEDS ■ TEAMWORK NEEDS ■ GROWTH NEEDS

- Q01: I know what is expected of me at work.
- Q02: I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.
- Q03: At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
- Q04: In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.
- Q05: My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.
- Q06: There is someone at work who encourages my development.
- Q07: At work, my opinions seem to count.
- Q08: The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.
- Q09: My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.
- Q10: I have a best friend at work.
- Q11: In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.
- Q12: This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

Engaged: Employees are highly involved in and enthusiastic about their work and workplace. They are psychological “owners,” drive performance and innovation, and move the organization forward.

Not engaged: Employees are psychologically unattached to their work and company. Because their engagement needs are not being fully met, they’re putting time — but not energy or passion — into their work.

Actively disengaged: Employees aren’t just unhappy at work — they are resentful that their needs aren’t being met and are acting out their unhappiness. Every day, these workers potentially undermine what their engaged coworkers accomplish.

06

A Closer Look at the 12 Elements of Engagement



4 in 10 U.S. employees strongly agree that when they are at work, they have the opportunity to do what they do best every day.

SOMETIMES PEOPLE ASK WHY THE 12 questions that make up Gallup's employee engagement survey haven't been modified or updated over the years. The workplace has changed, so why not the questions? We agree — the workplace has changed. The workplace is being reshaped and redefined by the modern workforce and an evolving mindset that prioritizes life before job, coach before boss, strengths before weaknesses, development before satisfaction and ongoing conversations before annual reviews. Add to that all of the technologies that enable — or impede — productivity, collaboration and interaction, and it becomes clear that the nature of the workplace is shifting.

Yet, underneath these changes are basic workplace needs — human needs. Over the course of nearly 20 years, Gallup has continually reviewed the 12 engagement elements and repeatedly found that for employees to be highly productive, they require clear role expectations, the ability to do what they do best, communication about their organization's mission and purpose, and learning and development opportunities, among others.

When employees' needs are met, they don't just become “happier” — they become better performers. The end goal of any employee engagement strategy should be improved performance, not inspiring a certain feeling in employees or hitting a specific number in a survey. For organizations, the 12 elements are proven performance management practices that can boost the outcomes of individuals, teams and the entire organization. And they haven't changed because they continue to improve individual, team and organizational performance.

When employees' needs are met, they don't just become “happier” — they become better performers.

For organizations, the 12 elements are proven performance management practices that can boost the outcomes of individuals, teams and the entire organization.

Organizations tend to get wrapped up in trying to move their overall engagement number and overlook the importance of the 12 elements. Engagement can only really be improved when leaders and managers focus on these elements and approach them in ways that create stronger agreement with the elements.

In the forthcoming sections, Gallup has included an in-depth overview of the elements, grouped by the four levels of employees' performance development needs.

For each engagement element, we've highlighted the most current U.S. data and the results from an analysis demonstrating how organizations can benefit from an increased focus on the element. We also have provided a brief description of the element's meaning and recommendations based on our clients' best practices.

Q01: I know what is expected of me at work.

Q02: I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.

Q03: At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.

Q04: In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.

Q05: My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.

Q06: There is someone at work who encourages my development.

Q07: At work, my opinions seem to count.

Q08: The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.

Q09: My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.

Q10: I have a best friend at work.

Q11: In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.

Q12: This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

BASIC NEEDS: WHAT DO I GET?

Q01. I know what is expected of me at work.

Six in 10 U.S. employees strongly agree with the first engagement element. By moving that ratio to eight in 10 employees, organizations could realize a 14% reduction in turnover, a 20% reduction in safety incidents and a 7% increase in productivity.

Clear expectations are the most basic and fundamental employee need.



Employees who strongly agree that their job description aligns with the work they are asked to do are 2.5 times more likely than other employees to be engaged. But the greatest pitfall of the first element is that managers assume the simplicity of the statement means they have a simple solution when their employees disagree with this element: "If people don't know what's expected, I'll just tell them."

Employees who strongly agree that their job description aligns with the work they are asked to do are 2.5 times more likely than other employees to be engaged.

Helping employees grasp what is expected of them is about much more than telling them what to do. They need to understand the fundamentals of their work, which include, but are not limited to, their job description. Unfortunately, less than half of employees (43%) strongly agree they have a clear job description, and even fewer (41%) strongly agree that their job description aligns with the work they are asked to do.

Employees become even more dissatisfied with this element of engagement when leaders fail to articulate a clear strategy for managers and employees to build expectations around. In many cases, employees are being held accountable for work that may or may not align with the work they are being evaluated on.

WHAT THE BEST DO

To optimize performance, organizations and managers must get this element right. The most effective managers:

- define and discuss both the explicit and implicit expectations for the employee's role and the team
- paint a picture of outstanding performance
- help employees understand how their work aligns with the work of their team members, business area and organization
- partner with their employees to set expectations
- frequently provide formal and informal feedback to help employees reach their goals

As priorities, roles and circumstances change, great managers continually assess and fine-tune expectations.

BASIC NEEDS: WHAT DO I GET?

Q02. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.

Three in 10 U.S. employees strongly agree with the second engagement element. By moving that ratio to six in 10 employees, organizations could realize an 11% increase in profitability, a 32% reduction in safety incidents and a 27% improvement in quality.



Of the 12 elements, a person having the materials and equipment to do their work well is the strongest indicator of job stress. Despite the functional nature of a question about “materials and equipment,” this engagement element measures both physical resource needs and potential barriers that exist between the employer and employee. Employees get frustrated with their manager or organization if they face goals and expectations that seem impossible to achieve. But like expectations, materials and equipment is not a checklist of tools parsed out to employees. Instead, it includes both tangible and intangible necessities for job performance. In today’s workforce, information and empowerment are often as necessary to a job as technology and office supplies.

Of the 12 elements, a person having the materials and equipment to do their work well is the strongest indicator of job stress.

WHAT THE BEST DO

Behind the connection between equipment and stress lies an encouraging fact: People want to do their jobs well. They want to be productive. The secret to improving in this element lies in the involvement, judgment and actions of managers. The most effective managers don't assume. Instead, they:

- ask for and listen to their employees' needs
- advocate for those needs when organizational funds are required
- communicate transparently about what can and cannot be provided

Successful managers are also resourceful. The best managers find ways to use their team's ingenuity and talents when employee requests cannot be fully funded. From carving out time to learn from free educational sources to asking the best performers to create job guides to share with others, the best managers work with their employees and leaders in creative ways to find solutions for meeting equipment and material needs.

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS: WHAT DO I GIVE?

Q03. At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.

Four in 10 U.S. employees strongly agree with the third engagement element. By moving that ratio to eight in 10 employees, organizations could realize an 8% increase in customer engagement scores, a 14% increase in profitability and a 46% reduction in safety incidents.



One of the most powerful strategies a manager and organization can implement is providing employees with opportunities to apply the best of their natural selves — their talents — as well as their skills and knowledge. The third element of engagement is the most important factor to employees when considering whether to take a job with a different organization, and it is one of the main reasons they choose to leave a job. When organizations and managers focus on giving people an opportunity to do what they do best, they can better attract, engage and retain employees. Unfortunately, organizations can put too little emphasis on any individual's abilities or accomplishments for fear others will feel hurt or left out. But meaningful differences present opportunities not only to advance business interests but also to improve the careers and lives of employees.

One of the most powerful strategies a manager and organization can implement is providing employees with opportunities to apply the best of their natural selves — their talents — as well as their skills and knowledge.

WHAT THE BEST DO

Matching the right person with the right job is a complicated responsibility. Successful managers start by understanding what a job requires and getting to know their employees as individuals. With that foundation in place, they more effectively can:

- build a performance development environment where there is ongoing dialogue, awareness and recognition of strengths
- talk to each employee about the unique value they provide to their team and organization
- make regular adjustments to align work, when possible, with team members' strengths

Successful managers understand that, realistically, employees will have tasks and responsibilities that don't quite fall into the "do what I do best" category, but they ensure the person's overall role and career opportunities make the most of their talents and strengths. Ultimately, the best managers know in which areas their employees excel and position them in the organization so they are individually engaged while providing value to the organization.

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS: WHAT DO I GIVE?

Q04. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.

Three in 10 U.S. employees strongly agree with the fourth engagement element. By moving that ratio to six in 10 employees, organizations could realize a 24% improvement in quality, a 27% reduction in absenteeism and a 10% reduction in shrinkage.

Top performers are hard to find, and once an organization has hired them, managers need to ensure that employees feel valued for their work and contributions, or they could be at risk of losing these talented team members. Employees who do not feel adequately recognized are twice as likely as those who do feel adequately recognized to say they'll quit in the next year. And given the low number of employees who strongly agree with this element, it may be one of the greatest missed opportunities for leaders and managers to improve engagement and performance. Workplace recognition motivates employees, gives them a sense of accomplishment and makes them feel appreciated for their work. The act of recognition also sends messages to other employees about what success looks like. In this way, recognition is both a tool for personal reward and an opportunity to reinforce the desired behavior to other employees.

Employees who do not feel adequately recognized are twice as likely as those who do feel adequately recognized to say they'll quit in the next year.

3 in 10

U.S. employees strongly agree that in the last seven days they have received recognition or praise for doing good work.

WHAT THE BEST DO

The challenge of the fourth element lies in the specificity and immediacy of providing recognition. Many organizations are trying to increase recognition by implementing technology-based tools for immediate and peer-based feedback. While these tools help to promote a recognition-rich environment, organizations need to be cautious not to rely on them too heavily. Technology is not a substitute for face-to-face recognition. And although technology-based peer feedback is worthwhile, a Gallup study reveals that employees consider other types of acknowledgment, including an award and private recognition from a boss, peer or customer, to be more memorable.

Managers can follow general guidelines for providing recognition and praise, but great managers realize that the best recognition is highly individualized. These managers:

- learn how employees like to be recognized
- praise people for doing good work and achieving their goals while emphasizing why the recognized act was important
- along with leaders, promote a recognition-rich environment with praise coming from multiple sources at multiple times

According to the same Gallup study previously cited, employees report that the most meaningful recognition comes from their manager, followed by recognition from a leader or CEO, their manager's manager, customers and peers.

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS: WHAT DO I GIVE?

Q05. My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.

Four in 10 U.S. employees strongly agree with the fifth engagement element. By moving that ratio to eight in 10 employees, organizations could realize an 8% improvement in engaged customers, a 32% reduction in safety incidents and a 41% reduction in absenteeism.



Employees need to know that they are more than a number. They need to know that someone is concerned about them as people first and as employees second. The fifth element of engagement may seem like a “soft” aspect of management, but there are key payoffs when employees feel cared for in a work environment. They are more likely to experiment with new ideas, share information, and support coworkers personally and professionally. They are prepared to give their manager and organization the benefit of the doubt, and they feel more equipped to strike a balance between their work and personal lives. In turn, they are more likely to be advocates for their employer.

Employees need to know that someone is concerned about them as people first and as employees second.

WHAT THE BEST DO

When managers and teams receive their engagement results, few choose to take defined action on this engagement element. The reluctance is not surprising — a person cannot manufacture “caring about” someone else. But organizations, managers and teams can and should focus on this employee need. The best managers do so by:

- investing in employees through awareness, time and intention
- getting to know the individual, acknowledging their achievements, holding performance conversations, conducting formal reviews and, above all, showing respect for the employee as an individual
- creating opportunities for development and career growth while fostering an environment for team collaboration and cohesion

By doing these things, managers make their employees feel genuinely valued and respected.

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS: WHAT DO I GIVE?

Q06. There is someone at work who encourages my development.

Three in 10 U.S. employees strongly agree with the sixth engagement element. By moving that ratio to six in 10 employees, organizations could realize a 6% improvement in engaged customers, an 11% improvement in profitability and a 28% reduction in absenteeism.

3 in 10

U.S. employees strongly agree that there is someone at work who encourages their development.

Gallup data show that a lack of development and career growth is the No. 1 reason employees leave a job. Development is part of a typically unwritten set of expectations that workers anticipate will be fulfilled. However, personal and professional development does not occur in a vacuum; it takes thoughtful effort and attention by both managers and employees over time. Employees need help navigating their career, whether that is through coaching, exposure and visibility, or challenging work assignments.

One common misunderstanding about this element of engagement is that “development” means “promotion.” Effective development may, in fact, lead to a promotion, but it doesn’t have to. More accurately, development is a process of understanding each person’s unique talents (naturally recurring patterns of thoughts, feelings or behaviors that can be productively applied) and finding roles, positions and projects that allow them to combine their talents and abilities with experiences to build strengths (the ability to consistently provide near-perfect performance in a specific activity).

Employees need help navigating their career, whether that is through coaching, exposure and visibility, or challenging work assignments.

WHAT THE BEST DO

Development is rooted in a strong manager-employee relationship. Interactions between employees and managers should include:

- defining goals, demonstrating improved performance and assessing progress toward achieving goals
- collaborating to discuss the employee's professional growth and development more than once a year
- having ongoing conversations
- creating opportunities to learn, grow, acquire new skills, try different ways of doing work and take on exciting challenges

Successful managers never look at development as a finished product. Instead, they coach their employees by identifying wins and misses, motivating employees to go beyond what they “think they can do,” connecting employees to potential mentors and holding them accountable for their performance.

TEAMWORK NEEDS: DO I BELONG HERE?

Q07. At work, my opinions seem to count.

Three in 10 U.S. employees strongly agree with the seventh engagement element. By moving that ratio to six in 10 employees, organizations could realize a 27% reduction in turnover, a 40% reduction in safety incidents and a 12% increase in productivity.

The days of managers and leaders having to “know it all” are quickly vanishing as organizations face unprecedented change, competition and stagnant organic growth. Leaders can't survive on their own, nor do they have all the answers. Asking for and considering individuals' input leads to more informed decision-making and better results.

This element of engagement is powerful and measures employees' sense of value and inclusion. Employees who believe they are heard feel appreciated for their insights and have opportunities to make significant contributions to their work environment. Employees are on the front lines of their organization. When leaders and managers are discussing or implementing changes, employees want to know that their input is being considered and encouraged and that they can voice their opinion without fear of retaliation.

Leaders can't survive on their own, nor do they have all the answers. Asking for and considering individuals' input leads to more informed decision-making and better results.



WHAT THE BEST DO

The most successful leaders and managers frequently and sincerely harness the knowledge assets of their employees to push through change, solve problems and innovate for growth. They listen to what is happening on the front line and ask for input along the way. The ways in which a manager listens to and processes an employee's thoughts and ideas can shape whether the employee feels valued for their contributions. That's why great managers:

- promote open, creative dialogue
- encourage new ideas that can positively influence business results
- provide open and honest feedback on opinions and ideas, advocating for good ones and addressing unfeasible ones
- create feedback loops so employees feel involved in decision-making processes

It is essential to this element that managers proactively ensure employees understand how a situation resolves after they offer an opinion or suggestion, as well as why a recommendation may not be possible to implement.

TEAMWORK NEEDS: DO I BELONG HERE?

Q08. The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.

Four in 10 U.S. employees strongly agree with the eighth engagement element. By moving that ratio to eight in 10 employees, organizations could realize a 41% reduction in absenteeism, a 50% drop in patient safety incidents and a 33% improvement in quality.

4 in 10

U.S. employees strongly agree that the mission or purpose of their company makes them feel their job is important.

The absence of many elements — job clarity, the proper equipment and resources, a match with one's talents, consistent feedback — become real obstacles to actual productivity. It's easy to see why they are required to get the job done. The same cannot be said for the eighth element: It is a strictly emotional need, and a higher-level one at that, as if employees cannot energize themselves to do all they could do without knowing how their job helps to fulfill a higher purpose. The data say that is just what happens. If a job were just a job, it would not matter where someone worked. But in a uniquely human twist, employees want meaning in their vocation. In fact, for millennials, it is among the strongest drivers of retention.

For reasons that transcend the physical needs fulfilled by earning a living, employees want to believe in what their employer does. They like the feeling of belonging to a community, whether that community is their company, sports team or church. Unfortunately, many leaders and managers tend to think that putting the company mission on a wall is enough to inspire employees to feel a connection. But it's not.

Employees cannot energize themselves to do all they could do without knowing how their job helps to fulfill a higher purpose.

WHAT THE BEST DO

More than with any other element, the importance of mission and purpose cannot solely be owned by the manager, as employees have personal experiences and values that often fuel their connection to a specific mission or purpose. But managers do play a large role in driving the success of this element. The best managers:

- bring the big picture to life for employees by cultivating a feeling of purpose
- clarify and promote the organization's mission to team members
- help employees discover how their role and daily tasks contribute to the realization of the organization's mission
- create opportunities for employees to share stories and mission moments

Leaders also play an important part in ensuring the organization's mission and purpose are clearly stated and aligned with the employee experience. Employees know when a mission is purely talk, so it is critical that they are able to experience it in the culture and deliver on it when meeting customer needs.

TEAMWORK NEEDS: DO I BELONG HERE?

Q09. My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.

Three in 10 U.S. employees strongly agree with the ninth engagement element. By moving that ratio to six in 10 employees, organizations could realize a 29% reduction in turnover and absenteeism, an 11% improvement in profit and a 6% increase in engaged customers.



Trusting that one's coworkers share a commitment to quality is vital to excellent team performance and critical to current work environments as work is becoming more interconnected, interdependent and project-based. The worst performer on the team sets the team's standards.

Employees need to be in an environment where there are mutual trust and respect for one another's efforts and results. This starts with a deep awareness of work standards and team expectations. By a six-to-one margin, people are more upset with a colleague who has the ability but does not try than a colleague who tries hard but does not have much ability. Highly productive employees see a vast difference between being assigned to a team and identifying with that team. Employees want to know that everyone on their team is pitching in to get the job done.

Employees need to be in an environment where there are mutual trust and respect for one another's efforts and results.

WHAT THE BEST DO

Employees can become resentful when they have a coworker who is not contributing or being held accountable for subpar performance. Great managers do not sit idly by and let a team erode. Instead, they:

- establish performance and accountability standards and ensure that all team members are held responsible for them
- foster an environment that consistently produces high-quality work by outlining quality standards for each task or function
- confirm that new team members know the importance of quality, recognizing employees who do high-quality work and having each team member share their expectations for quality work during team meetings

People managers have an additional duty when working in cross-functional team environments. Though they may not have the authority to coach employees who don't report to them, they have a duty to discuss expectations with project leaders, seek feedback on their employees' experiences with other departments and work across functional lines to establish expected levels of quality. Cross-functional alignment is critical to applying quality standards in matrixed structures.

TEAMWORK NEEDS: DO I BELONG HERE?

Q10. I have a best friend at work.

Two in 10 U.S. employees strongly agree with the 10th engagement element. By moving that ratio to six in 10 employees, organizations could realize 36% fewer safety incidents, 7% more engaged customers and 12% higher profit.

The 10th element of engagement is the most controversial of the 12 elements. More than any other element, “I have a best friend at work” tends to generate questions and skepticism. But one stubborn fact about this element of engagement cannot be denied: It predicts performance. Early research on employee engagement and the elements revealed a unique social pattern among employees in top-performing teams. When employees possess a deep sense of affiliation with their team members, they are driven to take positive actions that benefit the business — actions they may not otherwise even consider.

The 12 elements are not isolated; they work together to create the employee’s work experience. The best friend question sometimes gets a bad rap, but it consistently shows a strong relationship to improvements in customer engagement, profit, employee safety incidents and patient safety incidents. Beyond any talk of business outcomes or scientific validity, though, is a very simple premise: To ignore friendships is to ignore human nature. Yet, many organizations continue to abide by policies that dissuade or flat out discourage people from socializing or becoming friends.

When employees possess a deep sense of affiliation with their team members, they are driven to take positive actions that benefit the business — actions they may not otherwise even consider.



WHAT THE BEST DO

The best employers recognize that people want to build meaningful friendships and that company loyalty is built on such relationships. But friendships at work do need to be put in the proper context. Managers should not attempt to manufacture friendships; rather, they should create situations where people can naturally get to know one another. Great managers:

- look for opportunities to get their team members together for events
- encourage people to share stories about themselves
- plan time to socialize when it will not disrupt customers or work

For most teams and organizations, the best friend element should not be the top priority. In fact, if employees don't have basic and individual needs met (such as clarity of expectations, an opportunity to do what they do best, a manager who cares about them and opportunities to develop), then friendships can encourage gripe sessions.

On the other hand, if basic needs are met, friendships can take on a very powerful dynamic in which casual, friendly conversations turn into innovative discussions about how the team or organization can thrive. When basic needs are met, teams that strongly agree with the best friend element produce lower turnover rates than do other teams.

GROWTH NEEDS: HOW CAN I GROW?

Q11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.

Three in 10 U.S. employees strongly agree with the 11th engagement element. By moving that ratio to six in 10 employees, organizations could realize 34% fewer safety incidents, 26% less absenteeism and 11% higher profit.

For all the complexity of performance appraisals — the balanced scorecards, 360-degree feedback, self-evaluations and forced grading practices — the statement that shows the best connection between perceptions of evaluations and actual employee performance is remarkably simple: “In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.” The statement does not specify that the discussion has to be an official review. What is most important to employees is that they understand how they are doing, their manager’s perception of their work quality and where their work may be leading their career path.

What is most important to employees is that they understand how they are doing, their manager’s perception of their work quality and where their work may be leading their career path.

3 in 10

U.S. employees strongly agree that in the last six months, someone at work has talked to them about their progress.

Formal evaluations can be valuable, and managers have many reasons to use them. But success with the 11th element of engagement comes down to what happens between performance reviews. When a manager regularly checks in with their employees to review progress, team members are more likely to believe they get paid fairly, more likely to stay with the company, less likely to have accidents and more than twice as likely to recommend the company to others as a great place to work.

WHAT THE BEST DO

The best managers know that for employees to grow in their jobs, they must first know where they stand. They help employees know where they are in their professional journey and create collaborative goals toward professional growth. Feedback is essential to an employee's engagement and performance. The most effective managers:

- modify their feedback to fit the employee's personality, circumstances and potential
- regularly check in with employees and communicate how they are performing in their roles
- clarify job expectations, develop and track performance metrics, learn about employees' goals, and find creative ways to help employees reach their goals

It is important that managers strive to communicate often and honestly while intentionally making an effort to avoid micromanaging. Employees thrive when they have opportunities to work autonomously while receiving support from their manager.

Above all, great managers serve as coaches and motivate, guide and direct employees as they progress in their roles.

GROWTH NEEDS: HOW CAN I GROW?

Q12. This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

Four in 10 U.S. employees strongly agree with the 12th engagement element. By moving that ratio to eight in 10 employees, organizations could realize 44% less absenteeism, 41% fewer safety incidents and 16% higher productivity.

The desire to learn and grow is a natural human need and one that is required to keep employees motivated and progressing. They rarely remain enthusiastic or excited about their job when they have to do the same tasks every day without a chance to learn something new. When employees feel they are learning and growing, they work harder and more efficiently. And the best employees are never quite satisfied with their work. They always strive to find better, more productive ways to work. In this kind of work environment, innovation emerges. This is critical in a time when companies are thirsty for organic growth. When people grow, companies evolve and grow and are more likely to stay in business.

The desire to learn and grow is a natural human need and one that is required to keep employees motivated and progressing.

4 in 10

U.S. employees strongly agree that in the last year, they have had opportunities to learn and grow.

Mistakenly, many leaders and managers attribute this element solely to “additional” training, but growth takes many forms: finding a better way to do a job, taking on additional responsibilities, mentoring other team members or learning a new skill.

WHAT THE BEST DO

For many people, progress in a role distinguishes a career from employment that is “just a job.” Great managers understand that learning and growing at work should never cease. To help employees improve and develop, successful managers:

- find ways to challenge employees in positive ways
- assess current employees’ capabilities, look for ways to align those capabilities with long-term goals and aspirations, and codevelop short-term goals
- create learning opportunities at the individual level that are relevant to a larger, individual development plan and frequently check in on employees’ progress, asking them what they are learning and how often they are applying it to their roles
- help employees see the value in new opportunities and encourage them to take on new responsibilities — or even new roles — that can elevate the individual’s talents

Learning and growing are most effective and beneficial to employees and the organization when managers and employees work together to identify growth opportunities, establish goals that reflect those opportunities and evaluate progress toward them.

INTEGRATING THE 12 ELEMENTS INTO EVERYDAY CONVERSATIONS

When organizations effectively engage employees, they also improve the way they manage performance. Many organizations fall short of their performance goals, however, when they treat engagement as a thing to do or a survey to complete rather than a continuous way to manage and develop people.

Turning the 12 elements into cultural expectations for “how we do business” must take multiple forms in different levels of the organization. The 12 elements should align with the organization’s overall strategy and leadership expectations, be part of a clear and ongoing communication strategy, reflect accountability of leaders and managers, and drive a system for development that refines strengths-based performance coaching skills and charts the course for the right managerial job demands within the organization.

Transformation can and should occur at multiple levels. At the most basic level, managers need to discuss engagement needs with their employees, and at a higher level, they must transform the way they work with their teams. Additionally, leaders have to integrate engagement into their growth strategy, and organizations must create a culture of engagement.

If organizations want to engage their employees, the best place to start is by developing managers’ abilities to coach. Teaching managers to be a coach begins with helping them develop the communication, managerial and people skills needed to connect with their team, understand their needs, become an active part of their performance and individualize each team member’s development.

If organizations want to engage their employees, the best place to start is by developing managers’ abilities to coach.

The challenge then becomes making coaching an everyday part of a manager's routine, from anticipating how to handle different types of coaching scenarios to planning the logistics of fitting the necessary coaching conversations onto their calendar.

Gallup's overview of five types of coaching conversations that drive performance provides managers with a practical framework for how and when to execute the fundamentals of effective performance-oriented coaching conversations: establish expectations, provide continual coaching and create accountability. The framework helps managers understand the types of coaching conversations they should have and how to approach each. More specifically, it allows managers to revisit the 12 engagement elements more naturally through the five types of conversations.

With Gallup's five coaching conversations framework, managers learn the importance of spending disproportionately more time establishing expectations with their team by getting to know them, discussing why performance expectations exist and creating an open dialogue about the work they will be pursuing together. By having the right types of conversations with more frequency, managers increase their awareness of best practices and barriers to performance and become more efficient in managing their team members so they can do what they do best while achieving organizational goals.

FIVE TYPES OF COACHING CONVERSATIONS

- 1** **Role and relationship orientation**
Occurs when employees join the company, when job responsibilities shift and when employees change roles
- 2** **Quick connects**
Give managers an opportunity to assess quickly how an employee is doing and to identify successes and barriers
- 3** **Check-ins**
More formal opportunities to seek and give feedback on goal achievement, priorities, progress on projects and employee needs
- 4** **Developmental coaching**
Aims to direct and guide an employee to improved performance and individual career development
- 5** **Progress reviews**
Formal reviews of progress on goals, expectations and planning for future opportunities

Teaching managers to be a coach begins with helping them develop the communication, managerial and people skills needed to connect with their team, understand their needs, become an active part of their performance and individualize each team member's development.