

# Strategically Approaching Employee Engagement



***A guest article by Adrian Johansen*** | Image Source: Pexels  
Keeping employees engaged is a top priority in many businesses, but somehow the efforts are falling short. Worldwide, only 15% of employees are actively engaged in their work. Additionally, 63.3% of American companies say that retaining employees is harder than hiring them.

What's going wrong? All the work that companies put into employee engagement seems to be falling flat.

It's time to step back and look at the issue with fresh eyes. There are ways to keep employees engaged; it just may not be what you expect.

# Know What Truly Matters to Employees

Many business leaders assume that small consolation prizes like pizza parties will satiate their employee's professional appetite, but they would be wrong. It's done constantly, and it doesn't even come close to meeting employees' real needs.

If you're understaffed, a pizza party won't solve the overwork. Unfortunately, managers often go with what's easy and inexpensive rather than with what's effective.

Instead, it might be better to gain feedback from employees through work satisfaction surveys. You should ask questions that can give you insight into your employees' needs, ideas, and desires. Doing this along with updating outdated processes, hiring additional employees, or giving back to your community may do more to boost engagement than 100 pizza parties.

# Involve Employees in Creating Processes

Adapting your business is a continuous process, and the people who have the strongest insight about what needs to change are often the front-line workers. You can get better results from process improvements when you include them in the planning and execution.

Even more importantly, being included helps people feel like they are important to the organization. It improves morale and helps employees feel like they are valuable and part of the team. Instead of being told, they're being asked, and that can change everything. Empowering employees makes a real difference!

When you implement something new that employees have taken

part in, the updates will have more meaning to your staff and you'll get much higher buy-in. The process change is much more likely to succeed.

Don't stop there, though. Help employees understand that they are part of the team by sharing other information with them as well, from emergency response measures to continuity plans. Everyone can feel like an insider, and if they do, they will be much more engaged at work.

## **Give Daily Encouragement**

Because managers have a lot on their plate, they often spend all day responding to problems and putting out fires. As a result, you may only communicate with team members when there's an issue or performance problem.

Unfortunately, this means that negative feedback is only what your team receives from you. They need positive reinforcement as well. You can improve employee engagement by providing it. You don't have to go overboard or make a big deal out of everything. Simply share genuine gratitude often.

Daily boosts build up and create loyalty, which matters a lot more than a momentary buzz from an annual kickoff event. Be a boss that people respect. If they look up to you because of your actions, they'll be less likely to leave, and more likely to engage in the company. This applies to everyone involved in a company – everyone from those that work at the management level to front-line workers.

## **Start Engagement at the Very Top**

People know when their leaders are putting on a show compared to when they are genuinely enthusiastic. If engagement doesn't exist in your management team, you won't have engaged employees either.

Excitement is contagious, but so is cynicism. A key engagement strategy is to make sure you're encouraging great morale from everyone. This includes engagement from the very top of the company and those at the bottom.

If you're a manager struggling with a disengaged team, think about your disposition and how you display it around others. By working on your attitude and approach to work, you can make a big difference in your staff.

## **Develop the Careers of Your Staff**

Another difference you can make with your staff is giving them something to stay for. If someone is in a dead end with their job and can't see a way to advance, they'll disengage and start looking elsewhere for work.

Being intentional about career development can help motivate passive employees and keep enthusiastic ones engaged. Talk to each team member about their goals for work and help them develop new skills. Keep your eyes open for opportunities and encourage your employees to go for them.

Don't make your employees look elsewhere to advance their careers. They'll either stay and grow apathy for their job, or they'll take their skills to another company. Neither one is good for your team!

## **Create an Environment Where Employees Can Thrive**

As a business leader, it's important to have a team that's committed to the company's goals and involved in its future. To get there, you'll need to create an environment where employees are appreciated and encouraged to grow.

You can't force someone to be happy, of course. All you can do

is accept feedback and set the stage for people to succeed. Include your staff in process changes and significant decisions, help them develop, and pay attention to what matters.

When you do, your team will be an exception to the rule. They'll be genuinely engaged.



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Author Bio:

Adrian Johansen is a writer and consultant in the Pacific Northwest. She loves sharing knowledge with others and learning along the way! You can find more of her writing [here](#)

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## Ten Ways to Start Turning Overwhelm Around



(photo credit: Getty Images)

We are living in a time of overwhelm. We have all felt it, many of us deal with it on a consistent basis, and it erodes our potential, our results, and our happiness on a multiplicity of levels. Anxiety is destroying people and organizations from inside out.

**Let's take a look at what happens when we are stressed or overwhelmed.** The prefrontal cortex is the part of the brain that controls executive functions; clear thinking, decision-making, strategizing, planning, etc. When we are stressed the blood flow to the prefrontal cortex is reduced, making clear thinking increasingly difficult. The more stressed or anxious you become, the more difficult it is to focus and think.

**When we feel overwhelmed, we subconsciously look for a distraction to remove stressful feelings.** Rather than completing a project or dealing with a difficult situation, we surf the web, watch a program rather than doing our work, or dealing with a difficult situation because our thinking brain, our prefrontal cortex is not working properly because our survival/fight or flight mechanism is in play.

██████████ Rather than beating yourself up for going into fight/reactionary, flight or freeze response, try one of these 5-minute exercises knowing that the stress, anger or overwhelm will pass, and you will be able to refocus on your most important objective after refocus, repurpose and repower.

**Here are 10 5-minute exercises (cool tools) to help beat stress or overwhelm**

1. **Do ██████████** a mindfulness exercise that takes 2 minutes, 3 times a day for 7 days to be effective. You can't meditate? You don't want to learn about mindfulness? Do The Pause! It is transformative if practiced regularly, and science confirms its positive impact on your potential, results, and health.
2. **Take charge of tension by releasing it, fast.** Clench whatever part of your body is tense and release it. Even better, do your whole body-clenching & releasing.
3. **Drink/sip ice water.** Fluids move hormones into exactly the right places for sustaining energy, and those same fluids eliminate toxic wastes that can accumulate and wear you down.
4. **Change your state, move your body,** jump, dance, do chair yoga take 5 minutes to get energetic because inactivity is an unnatural state for us..
5. **Laugh, yes have a joke collection or clips** you can watch for 5 minutes that make you laugh. Laughing gives your brain an aerobic workout, and it is an excellent stress reliever and mood booster. Smiling automatically elevates our mood.
6. **Take a 5-minute time out. Block out all stress or worries.** Think about something that really makes you happy or visualize your favorite place or vacation spot. Yes, take a happiness time out!
7. **Meditate, pray, listen to music, or read poetry for 5 minutes.**
8. **Journal for up to 5 minutes,** longitudinal studies have

proven that keeping a confidential emotional journal where you can write out your deepest emotions, releasing the tension associated with them not only makes people feel better, but it also enhances healing and recuperation time.

9. **Take a 1 minute time out. Wiggle your toes** (it distracts your brain) Block out all stress or worries. Think about something that really makes you happy. Yes, take a happiness time out!
10. **Doodle or color for five minutes. Creativity is a great stress reliever.**

Make the critical shift forward because it is possible to retrain our brains, re-center our hearts, and learn to think, communicate, and collaborate better at the speed of change and in the face of challenges, competition, anxiety, overwhelm and even stasis.

Try one of these free five minute tool cools on for fit this week. You need to do them consistently for 7 days to begin to see results.

**Author Bio:** Irene Becker a self professed nerd who is on a mission to change the world. Irene completed a certification in trauma counselling in addition to post graduate certifications in management coaching, life coaching, emotional intelligence coaching and completed her executive coaching certification with the #2 leadership coach in the world, John Mattone. **Most of all, Irene believes that together, we can create a better tomorrow.**

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Just Coach It • The 3Q Edge™  
**IRENE BECKER**  
E-mail: irene@justcoachit.com

Phone  
(416)671-4726

Skype  
beckerirene

## Cool Tool-5 min. success step



We are living in chaotic times, and the upside of chaos is of course that it is a state generating new solutions and often incredible answers. The downside of chaos is before us each day; record levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. I focus on helping clients use change as an asset, as a springboard for great personal and business leadership, purpose, communication, collaboration, and success.

There is no doubt that adopting a new mindset = new results,

and building a growth mindset is critical. Carol Dweck's landmark book, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* is a must-read. *Click here to read Carol Dweck's Article on Growth Mindset* in Harvard Business Review

The first step in building a new relationship with change, a new relationship with the times in which we live starts with focusing on your wins. We are automatically wired to see the negative, and while doing so helped us when we were living in caves, it is now one of the biggest causes of failure. *Turn Negativity Around: 3 Simple-Practical-Powerful Ways To Reset The Internal GPS*

### **COOL TOOL: SELF ESTEEM BOOSTER | 5 MIN JOURNALING**

Take 5-10 minutes every day to notice and acknowledge positive aspects of yourself and your day because doing so is an important self-esteem booster! Start a journal or add these questions to your daily journal. Great way to wrap up the day!

**What is my best achievement of today?**

**What is a challenge (or challenges) I successfully overcame today?**

**Today, I had fun when...**

I call tools that take 5-10 minutes or less a day and are free, Cool Tools! You may be skeptical, but they do work!

**Try this one for a week, and send me your feedback!**

*Photo Credit: Getty Images*

**DO you want to turn the tables on stress?** Achieve personal and business success at the speed of change? Help your executive team master the soft skills and new mindset that leads to breakthrough results? **Reach out and I will reach back!** irene@justcoachit.com – your catalyst for success at the speed of change



Just Coach It • The 3Q Edge™  
**IRENE BECKER**  
E-mail: irene@justcoachit.com

Phone  
(416) 671-4726  
Skype  
beckerirene