



# Employee Engagement for All

18 Approaches to Transform Employee Engagement

Into

Workplace Engagement

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## How to Transform Employee Engagement into Workplace Engagement



There are a plethora of methods and approaches to fostering and enhancing employee engagement. Actions can be launched by individuals, leaders, and organizations. When all 3 are working together we move beyond simple employee engagement to workplace engagement with engagement for all!

Yet, the workplace of today is asking more and more from everyone with less and less time to stop and determine what to do and how to do it. If we are given too many things to do we may give up or avoid them simply because we are overwhelmed and there are too many things to do already. It can be a challenge simply to remember to focus on employee engagement.

### **I recommend a 2 x 2 x 2 design structure:**

1. What are 2 actions organizations can take to enhance employee engagement?
2. What are 2 actions leaders can take to enhance employee engagement?
3. What are 2 actions individuals can take to enhance employee engagement?

When everyone is taking action and working together we move beyond employee engagement to workplace engagement with engagement for all. You also get the multiplier effect as  $2 \times 2 \times 2 = 8$ . The multiplier effect from a systems perspective means: changes in one field of human activity (subsystem) sometimes act to promote changes in other fields (subsystems) and in turn act on the original subsystem itself. This becomes full workplace engagement when we are seeing actions from leaders, employees, and the organization.

In the next 3 articles I will outline the potential actions of each of these groups. I encourage you to determine the 2 most powerful actions you can perform to elevate employee engagement.

## 7 Organizational Inputs into Employee Engagement



To achieve elevated levels of employee engagement, efforts must come from organizations, leaders, and employees. This article will outline 7 actions organizations can take to foster higher levels of employee engagement.

**Assess and remove any roadblocks** or hurdles to employee engagement. Ask employees what could be removed or lessened to increase their level of engagement with the organization.

**Create an engagement culture** where employee engagement is valued, discussed, shared, and lived. Employee engagement needs to be both recognized and appreciated.

**Ensure that the top leaders within the organization are committed to employee engagement.** Leaders must model engagement and commit to investing organizational resources into the engagement initiatives.

**Move beyond measuring employee engagement to taking action on those measures.** Attend to your metrics but focus on your people.

**Help employees see the benefit of employee engagement** for themselves and their customers. Don't let your engagement initiatives become organizational manipulations to merely squeeze out more productivity and discretionary effort from employees.

**Study your highly engaged employees** to determine the vital behaviors they perform that contribute to their high level of engagement. Once those behaviors are determined work at spreading those behaviors to other people within the organization. Strive to make employee engagement a viral phenomenon within your organization.

**Educate leaders and managers** within the organization on how to foster employee engagement and help leaders understand and leverage their key role in employee engagement efforts.

## 5 Leadership Inputs into Employee Engagement



The last article outlined 7 organizational inputs to foster employee engagement. This article outlines 5 key inputs into employee engagement from leaders and managers within the organization.

**Engage yourself.** Before you can foster or enhance the engagement of employees, never lose sight that you are one of those employees. Keep a focus on your own levels of employee engagement as you also champion engagement for others.

**Hold engaging conversations.** Avoid making employee engagement an announcement or policy. Ensure your employee engagement has a grass roots conversational quality to it. Talk with your employees. Doc Searls talking about conversational marketing stated: *conversations are about talking, not announcing. They're about listening, not surveying. They're about paying attention, not getting attention.* In many ways, employee engagement is less about what you put in and more about what you draw out of employees.

**Be strong and strengthen others.** Employees who work from their strengths and have work designed around their strengths are more engaged. As leaders, we must also talk with people about their strengths. There are many pathways to strengths. Ensure you are on the path to success through strengths.

**Apply the simple and significant.** I am passionate about employee engagement and believe it makes a huge difference for all in the workplace while I also recognize how many tasks the average leader must juggle. It is not my intention to make employee engagement an imposition in an already overcrowded day. I encourage you to find the simplest yet most significant thing you can do to advance employee engagement.

**Engage the clutch.** My experience with the majority of leaders in organizations is that they respond to the full slate of demands with an excess of engagement and hours worked. We must regularly engage the clutch and go to neutral. Engaged leaders also find time for rest, recovery, and renewal. The path to full engagement also involves periods of disengagement.

## 6 Dynamic Employee Contributions to Workplace Engagement

The last two articles in this series have outlined organizational and leadership inputs into employee engagement. Employees are sometimes targeted as the



source and sole intervention to elevate employee engagement. When the organization and leadership also contribute to engagement initiatives it can facilitate even higher levels of engagement.

That said, employees themselves are closest to the source of their own engagement. I believe the individual is ultimately **responsible** for their own engagement while the organization and leadership is **accountable** for employee engagement.

**Here are 6 inputs employees can engage with to elevate their own engagement:**

**Focus on contribution.** Determine how you can make a contribution. Know that what you give is often what you receive in return. To be disengaged at work can often lead to experiences of disengagement in other areas of your life. Engagement is not a limited resource and research would suggest that higher levels of employee engagement at work translate to higher levels of engagement at home and in the community. Focus on contribution and banish entitlement.

**Be responsible while holding others accountable.** Take responsibility for your own engagement while holding others accountable for their engagement. Encourage the leadership and the organization to keep making their contributions to elevate employee engagement. In the the movement from employee engagement to workplace engagement: *if it is to be it is up to we!*

**Master your personal energy.** Energy is your fundamental raw material for employee engagement. Learn to master your energy at work. Increase your levels of mental, emotional, physical and spiritual energy while also ensuring you take time for energy recovery. One paradox of employee engagement is that we must also find times to disengage from work to recharge and revitalize ourselves for the work ahead.

**Be strong.** Know your strengths while also knowing what strengthens you. What are the gifts or qualities you bring to your work and what are the activities you engage in that strengthen you? People who know their strengths, use their strengths on a daily basis, and use their strengths in the service of others report higher levels of authentic happiness at work.

**Own your work.** Some people make their marks while others sign their names. Make your work a signature of who you are. Many organizations not only treat you like an owner they ensure that employees literally own a piece of the company. There is a great deal of truth to the statement: *nobody washes a rented car.*

**Obliterate the *if only*.** Don't postpone your engagement efforts waiting for the *if only*. *If only the organization would do this, if only my manager would recognize me, if only I had a different job...* Stop the *if only* and do what you can with what you've got wherever you are. Practice the advice of the great NCAA basketball coach, John Wooden: **don't let what you cannot do interfere with what you can.**

In conclusion, follow the instruction a rugby referee gives to get the scrum started: **ENGAGE!**

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