

HR LEADER'S

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT GUIDE 2023

LEAD

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Introduction

HR and people operations leaders understand the critical role that employee engagement plays in driving organizational success.

In this guide, we will explore the latest insights, strategies, and solutions that will help you elevate your employee engagement initiatives to new heights with the goal of creating a thriving and motivated workforce in 2023 and beyond.



Why is employee engagement important now?

Even in an economic downturn, when budgets are being cut and layoffs are prevalent, the importance of employee engagement remains paramount. The heartbeat of any thriving organization is its engaged workforce - employees who feel an emotional bond and commitment to their work and their employer, surpassing mere job satisfaction.



In challenging times, employee engagement becomes even more crucial. Teams that maintain high levels of engagement tend to show greater resilience, productivity, and overall well-being, which are crucial for navigating economic uncertainty.

Why is employee engagement important now?

Empirical studies have consistently reinforced the value of employee engagement. For instance, Gallup's research highlights that organizations with highly engaged employees shows:

81%
Less absenteeism

18%
Higher productivity

23%
Higher profitability

Moreover, engaged employees tend to remain loyal to their organizations, reducing turnover and associated costs. In times of financial strain, a stable and dedicated workforce is an invaluable asset. Hence, keeping employee engagement high should be a priority for companies, regardless of economic circumstances

Engaged vs. disengaged employees

Economic downturns and layoffs are affecting millions of people globally. This makes understanding the health and motivation levels of the workforce even more vital for HR leaders. By keeping an eye out for behavioral cues, you can glean valuable insights into your employees' engagement levels, which could be pivotal in weathering financial challenges.



Engaged employees display a genuine commitment and enthusiasm towards their work. They go above and beyond their job requirements, actively seek opportunities for growth and development, and take pride in their contributions to the organization. Engaged employees are often proactive, collaborative, and demonstrate a strong sense of ownership and accountability.

On the other hand, **disengaged employees** exhibit a different set of behaviors that indicate a lack of motivation and connection to their work. They tend to do the bare minimum, completing tasks without much enthusiasm or effort. Disengaged employees may show little interest in company social activities, viewing them as mere obligations rather than opportunities to connect with colleagues and foster a sense of belonging. They may even express resentment towards their jobs, leading to decreased productivity and a negative impact on team morale.

Engaged vs. disengaged employees

Engaged Employees	***Disengaged Employees***
Proactive	Minimal effort
Committed	Negative attitude
Enthusiastic	Lack of interest
Collaborative	Isolation
Solution-oriented	Limited growth mindset
Positive influencer	Absenteeism
Continuous learner	Resistance to change

Note: *These behaviors are general indicators, and it is essential to consider the specific context and individual circumstances when assessing employee engagement levels. Learn how to create a culture of engagement within the organization in the next topic of this guide.*

At this time of economic instability, HR leaders must stay extra vigilant and proactive in detecting signs of employee disengagement. This could be done by taking note of subtle indicators like a dip in productivity, increased absenteeism, a rise in conflicts, or a deterioration in the quality of work. In addition, leveraging technologies for active employee listening can offer valuable insights into the workforce's sentiments.

Engaged vs. disengaged employees



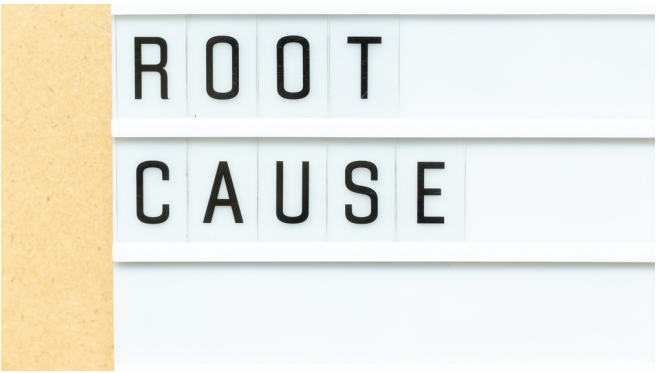
In particular, HR leaders must focus on nurturing positive employee sentiments, especially after implementing significant organizational changes that could disrupt the workforce's status quo. Understanding that these changes could foster insecurity or confusion, it becomes paramount to reiterate the company's commitment to its employees.

By addressing these underlying issues promptly, HR leaders can implement targeted strategies to re-engage their employees. This could involve communication initiatives to clarify changes, supportive measures to ease transitions, or even personalized solutions based on feedback collected through employee listening tools.

Ultimately, maintaining employee engagement in an economic downturn is about actively monitoring, responding to, and nurturing the emotional well-being of the workforce. It's about fostering an environment where employees feel heard, valued, and confident about their role in the company's future, even in challenging times.

6 ways to turn disengagement to engagement

In a challenging economic climate, the task of transforming disengaged employees into engaged contributors can feel overwhelming. However, it's not an insurmountable task, and with strategic measures, HR leaders can significantly improve employee engagement.



1. Understand the Root Causes

Start by understanding the causes of disengagement. Are they feeling unrecognized, overwhelmed, under-challenged, or disconnected from the team? Use listening tools and employee surveys to gain insights into their sentiments.

2. Open Communication

Give disengaged employees a safe space to express their concerns and thoughts without fear of judgment. In doing so, you'll not only understand their viewpoint but also help them feel valued and heard. HR leaders should also strive to create an environment where employees feel comfortable expressing their thoughts, ideas, and concerns. Regularly sharing updates and information helps employees stay informed about the organization's progress and fosters a sense of transparency. Actively seeking employee feedback demonstrates that their voices are valued and can lead to improvements in processes and policies.



6 ways to turn disengagement to engagement



3. Personalize the Approach

Each employee is unique, so a one-size-fits-all approach may not work. Tailor the engagement strategies based on individual employee needs and preferences. This could include providing training, opportunities for growth, more challenging tasks, or a greater sense of ownership.

4. Foster a Positive Culture

A positive and inclusive culture can do wonders in re-engaging employees. Ensure that your workplace encourages collaboration, mutual respect, and recognition. Celebrate small wins and individual contributions to boost morale and motivation.





5. Provide Support during Organizational Changes

Major changes can cause insecurity and confusion among employees. Clear communication about the changes, how it affects them, and the support available can help mitigate these feelings.

6 ways to turn disengagement to engagement

6. A Positive Work-Life Balance

Organizations that prioritize work-life balance and offer flexible work arrangements empower employees to manage their personal responsibilities while still meeting work commitments. HR leaders can promote work-life balance by advocating for flexible schedules, telecommuting options, and encouraging employees to take regular breaks. By showing genuine concern for employees' well-being, organizations create an environment where employees feel supported and can bring their best selves to work.



Key Takeaway: Fostering employee engagement is an ongoing effort that requires a holistic approach. By building a culture that supports engagement through clear communication, recognition, learning opportunities, and work-life balance, organizations can create an environment where employees thrive and contribute their full potential.

How to measure and maintain employee engagement?

To ensure ongoing success in employee engagement initiatives, it is crucial to measure and maintain engagement levels. By implementing effective measurement strategies, LEAD's top recommendation is utilizing an **Employee Engagement Survey** or **Pulse Survey**. It is the most simple yet the most effective and accurate way to gain valuable insights into employee sentiment and take proactive steps to maintain and enhance engagement levels. Unlike traditional annual surveys, which can be time-consuming and infrequent, pulse surveys are shorter and more frequent, allowing organizations to capture timely insights on specific topics or issues. These surveys are designed to be quick and easy to complete, ensuring high participation rates and enabling HR leaders to track engagement levels more frequently.

When designing pulse surveys, it is essential to focus on relevant and actionable questions that provide meaningful insights. HR leaders should consider topics such as work-life balance, communication effectiveness, career development opportunities, recognition, and overall job satisfaction. By addressing these key areas, organizations can identify specific areas for improvement and implement targeted strategies to enhance employee engagement.



How to measure and maintain employee engagement?

For example, at LEAD, we usually ask these questions to our employees. You can use our survey template below to ask your employees about their connectivity satisfaction level within your company:

1. On a scale of 1-10, how connected do you feel with your colleagues?
2. How often do you communicate with your team members?
3. Do you feel you have enough opportunities to collaborate with your colleagues?
4. How easy is it for you to find the information you need to do your job?
5. Do you feel like you have the necessary tools and resources to communicate effectively with your team?
6. How satisfied are you with the communication channels within the company?
7. Do you feel like you receive enough feedback and recognition from your colleagues and managers?
8. How supported do you feel by your colleagues and managers in achieving your goals?
9. How satisfied are you with your work-life balance?
10. Do you feel like the company provides enough opportunities for socializing and building relationships with colleagues?

The secret to maintaining employee engagement goes beyond mere data collection; it lies in the action taken based on survey results. HR leaders should critically evaluate the data, decipher emerging trends, and formulate plans to tackle the discovered issues. Conveying the survey findings and corresponding actions with transparency illustrates the organization's commitment to valuing and responding to employee feedback. This strategy cultivates an atmosphere of ongoing improvement and engagement. If you're in search of a reliable Pulse Survey tool, consider giving LEAD.bot a try.



Side Note: why tailoring engagement strategies and avoiding cuts to "non-essential" expenses matters

As we navigate the ever-changing work landscape of today, it has become clear to organizations that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to employee engagement strategies is outdated. To genuinely unleash their workforce's potential in 2023, HR leaders need to acknowledge the unique needs and demographics of their employees and devise initiatives that align with their individual requirements.

Moreover, we've recently noticed a trend where companies that had aggressively cut **"non-essential" spending** (such as education allowances, training, travel, etc.) in response to economic downturns, are starting to reconsider these decisions. This is crucial as these seemingly "non-essential" expenses are often integral to employee engagement. Reducing education allowances and training opportunities, for instance, can inadvertently send a message that the company does not value employee growth, leading to decreased engagement and a higher likelihood of regrettable churn.

Side Note: why tailoring engagement strategies and avoiding cuts to "non-essential" expenses matters

Employee engagement strategies may vary but one thing you should always consider as an HR leader in 2023 is **employee well-being.** Employee well-being is an integral component of engagement, and wellness programs play a crucial role in supporting it. HR leaders can promote physical and mental wellness by providing and discussing wellness resources and encouraging work-life balance. Some initiatives that you and your organizations can help support employee well-being include:



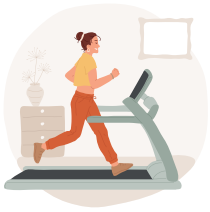
Sharing relevant podcasts, articles, and tips on self-care and stress management



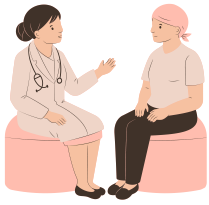
Ensure ergonomic workstations



Encourage breaks and time off



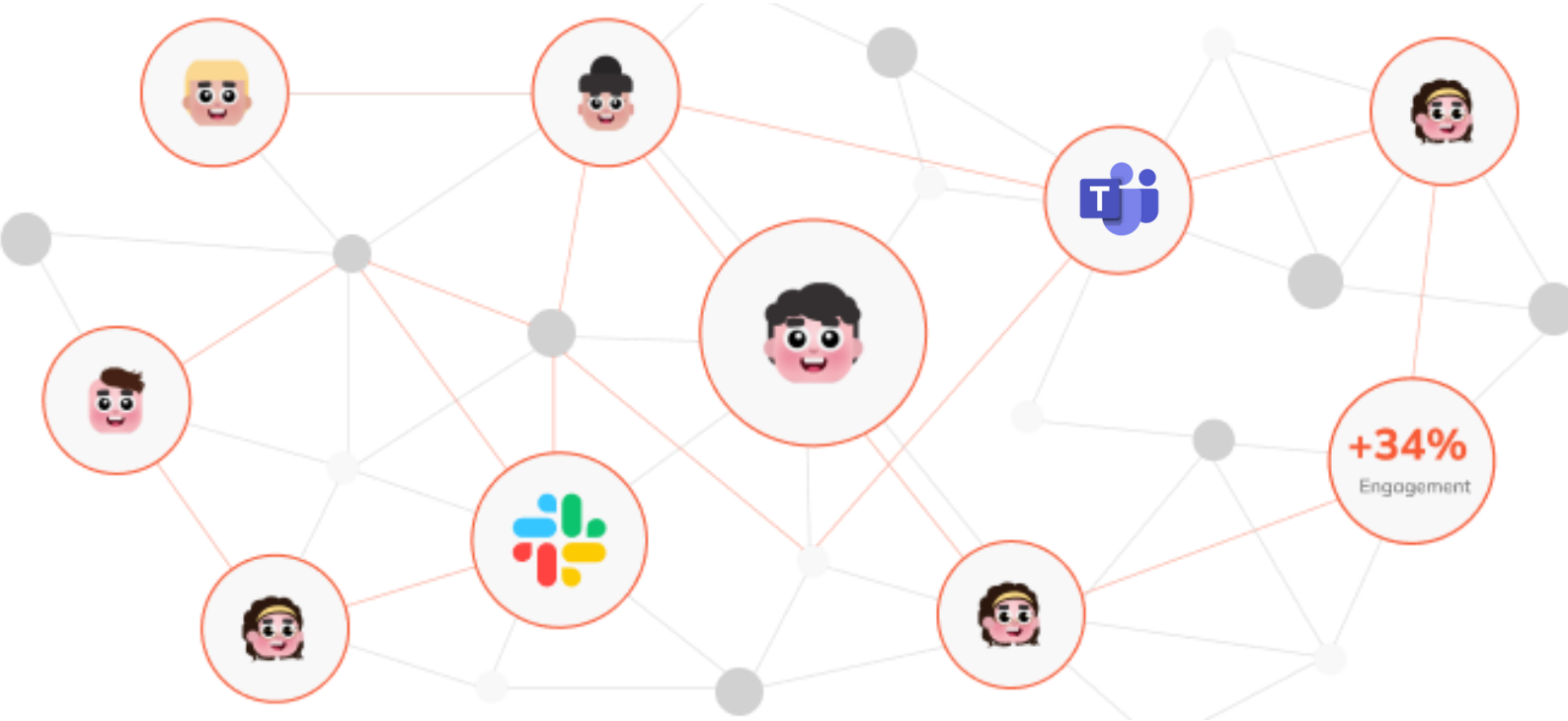
Provide access to fitness programs



Provide access to mental health check ups or in-house counseling



Appreciate employee contributions



ABOUT **LEAD**

LEAD.bot is a powerful cloud-based software that boosts employee engagement and performance through data-driven insights. With features like virtual coffee meetups, peer mentorship, DEI discussions, and more, LEAD.bot seamlessly integrates with platforms like Slack and Microsoft Teams, connecting remote teams and nurturing a sense of belonging. Additionally, it offers pulse surveys, onboarding support, birthday celebrations, and AI-powered watercooler chats, enhancing employee engagement, fostering a positive culture, and promoting team collaboration.

Trusted by over 1000 organizations including LinkedIn, Microsoft and 1 of the top 5 US consulting firms, LEAD.bot has proven to be a reliable solution for enhancing workplace dynamics and creating a thriving environment where employees can thrive and succeed. Learn more at https://www.lead.app/

Got feedback? Please share your feedback, by reaching out to us at hi@lead.app. Continuous improvement is important to us.