

TalentMap Employee Survey

Whitepaper



Are you on the path to Engagement?

MEASURE.



ANALYZE.



ACT.



WHAT IS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT?

Is engagement measured by an employee's job satisfaction, job commitment, intent to stay or willingness to go the extra mile? More importantly, what drives engagement – a challenging job, the right compensation package, a good relationship with one's boss or simply the ability to trust senior leadership?

As executives worldwide wake to the enormous benefits of an engaged workforce, the number of questions that are being asked about employee engagement continues to grow. Specifically, senior leadership would like to know how to define engagement and what drives it.

This paper outlines TalentMap's definition of employee engagement and the model we use to determine engagement drivers in the workplace. mistakes. The phrase "we've always done it that way" was quite common.

Results also showed that senior leadership viewed employee engagement as an "HR issue" rather than an organization-wide endeavor. To assist the HR team lead the initiative after the survey, TalentMap partnered with the team to help them develop effective action plans with their various business lines.



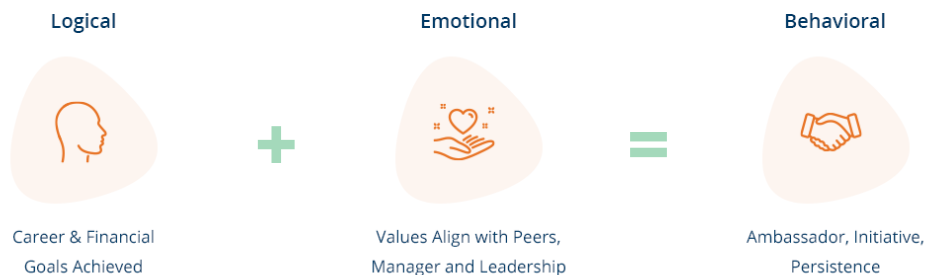
DEFINING ENGAGEMENT

It was about 17 years ago when the specific concept of employee engagement originally surfaced. Yet the search to understand what motivates employees to establish logical and emotional ties to their job, department and organization reaches back to a time when we first began to organize labor.

The term ‘employee engagement’ doesn’t mean the same thing to everyone in all organizations. In fact, if you ask five HR professionals about the topic, you will likely receive five different answers back. Some might equate it to job satisfaction or commitment; while others feel that it has to do with having a ‘best friend’ at work. A third group might suggest that it rests solely on an employee’s relationship with their boss. Such varied answers can seem somewhat confusing, given the fact that we often hear the term thrown around corporate boardrooms so extensively that we would presume all were singing off the same song sheet.

“Engagement is a natural extension of discussions on motivation, satisfaction, commitment, and empowerment, etc. – all concepts that have been thoroughly explored for decades. Thought leaders on employee engagement represent backgrounds in all of these approaches and, therefore, their contributions have led to an unfortunate outcome known as ‘conceptual bleed’. This conceptual bleed leads to competing definitions of employee engagement that represent different theoretical points of view.”¹

Despite the differences, practitioners and academics alike agree that any employee engagement definition must include three factors: 1) a rational or logical factor, 2) an emotional attachment factor, and 3) the resulting behavioral outcomes factor.



At TalentMap, we use our “Head, Heart and Hands” framework to describe those three factors. More specifically, the rational or logical factor, or Head, relates to employees who make a sound evaluation of themselves, their skills, knowledge and understanding relative to the broader organizational mission, goals and objectives. This factor takes into consideration how well the job at hand and the organization as a whole helps an employee achieve his or her career/job or financial goals. On the other hand, the emotional attachment factor, or Heart, taps into how an employee connects beyond logic to the organization’s story, its values and ultimately the values of its leadership team and immediate manager. This emotional factor describes how an employee can develop a deeper sense of belonging to their co-workers, their business unit and the organization.

Finally, the behavioral factor, or Hands component, captures the outcomes that employers desire, such as an employee’s intent to stay (retention) and their willingness to go the extra mile and/or provide discretionary effort. TalentMap measures employee engagement using six behavioral-based statements. The degree to which an employee agrees or disagrees with each determines their level of employee engagement. Combined, they form TalentMap’s employee engagement index.



TalentMap's Six Engagement Items

1. I am proud to tell others I work for my organization.
2. I am optimistic about the future of my organization.
3. My organization inspires me to do my best work.
4. I would recommend my organization to a friend as a great place to work.
5. My job provides me with a sense of personal accomplishment.
6. I can see a clear link between my work and my organization's long-term objectives.

Other Sample Employee Engagement Survey Items

Dell

- Even if I were offered a comparable position with a similar pay and benefits at another company, I would stay at Dell.
- Considering everything, Dell is the right place for me.

Institute for Employment Studies

- A positive attitude toward, and pride in the organization.
- A willingness to behave altruistically and be a good team player.
- An understanding of the bigger picture and a willingness to go beyond the requirements of the job.

Intuit

- I am proud to work for Intuit.
- I would recommend Intuit as a great place to work.
- I am motivated to go “above and beyond” what is expected of me in my job.

It is important to note that there is no single ‘right’ definition for employee engagement. Its definition depends on the organization's objectives and its level of process maturity along with the industry in which it operates. That said, one of the best definitions we have come across on employee engagement is as follows:

Employee engagement is a heightened emotional and intellectual connection that an employee has for his/her job, organization, manager, or co-workers that, in turn, influences him/her to apply additional discretionary effort to his/her work.²

Other Sample Employee Engagement Survey Definitions³

Dell: To compete today, companies need to win over the MINDS (rational commitment) and the HEARTS (emotional commitment) of employees in ways that lead to extraordinary efforts.

Institute for Employment Studies: A positive attitude help by the employee toward the organization and its values. An engaged employee is aware of the business context, and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. The organization must work to develop and nurture engagement, which requires a two-way relationship between the employer and employee.



DRIVERS OF ENGAGEMENT

Now that we better understand what engagement is, let's turn our attention to its drivers. Current research identifies between 5 to 20 plausible drivers for employee engagement. Gibbons, noted above, further summarized the eight most common dimensions across which all models are reviewed. He also found the following set of engagement drivers appearing consistently across work published by leading practitioners and academics:

1. Trust and integrity
2. Nature of the job
3. Line of sight
4. Career growth opportunities
5. Pride about the company
6. Co-workers/team members
7. Employee development/training
8. Personal relationship with one's immediate manager.

TalentMap measures each of the eight common drivers listed above, albeit in slightly different terminology. The company also goes beyond simply measuring the drivers of engagement by adding four additional drivers measuring business performance. This survey model includes additional measures of perception as they relate to:

9. Customer/client/patient service
10. Innovation
11. Work/life balance
12. Work environment

While these last four dimensions are not always significant drivers of engagement nor do they appear among the eight common dimensions mentioned above, they are significant business performance drivers leading to positive business outcomes. They are also important metrics for any organization that wants to improve both engagement and performance.

TalentMap augments the best in current thought regarding methods for measuring the employee engagement drivers with important high-performance business measures to deliver a more comprehensive assessment of the workplace that delves beyond engagement. This approach asserts that pairing a high-performance organization with an engaged workforce unites complementary goals and offers the necessary ingredients for optimal success. Achieving performance excellence and employee engagement, however, involves different leadership, management practices and behaviors. Thus we measure employee engagement and business performance using the model outlined below.



LINKING ENGAGEMENT TO PERFORMANCE

In 1999, TalentMap Founder Sean Fitzpatrick collaborated with Dr. Tom Foard to develop the original TalentMap employee satisfaction survey based on a comprehensive best practice review of other organizations along with active participation in the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP). This review included a detailed study of more than 30 survey instruments and a thorough scan of published peer reviewed academic papers and white papers published by leading consultancies. The initial employee satisfaction survey was developed, field tested and validated with 10 knowledge-based organizations across Canada that included 3,000 respondents.

More recently, we arrived at our current understanding of employee engagement through a combination of our past 17 years of research in the field with more than 1000 organizations plus ongoing reviews of published research that has been presented by leading practitioners and academics in a variety of conferences and journals annually. Today our employee engagement model combines our 17+ years of experience with immense research conducted by experts in the field, such as Dan Denison, David Maister, Gallup and Jim Collins. We consciously selected the work of these experts to augment our research model because they developed four well-documented empirical models linking employee feedback to organizational performance.

The first was produced and published by Dr. Dan Denison, formerly of the University of Michigan Business School and current Professor of Organizational Development at the International Institute of Management Development (IMD) in Lausanne, Switzerland. He measured Organization Culture across hundreds of organizations and found that the lowest 10 percent of companies produced a ROI of only six percent while the top 10 percent produced a ROI of 21 percent.

The second was created by Dr. David Maister, formerly of Harvard Business School. He surveyed 29 firms in 15 countries to determine whether positive employee attitudes in fact correlate with corporate success. In this work he was able to show that, in many companies, it truly is attitudes that drive financial results and organizational success and not, as widely believed, the other way round.

The third was developed by Gallup using an impressive sample size of 8,000 managers and one million staff from 400 companies. Gallup used its expertise in survey research to link employee engagement to business performance.

Finally, the work produced by Jim Collins in “Good to Great”, though his work does not include specific results of employee surveys, provides an impressive empirical framework to improve business performance. We used his framework to inform some of our business performance dimensions, such as Innovation and Customer/Client/Patient Service.

Since TalentMap developed its first job satisfaction and subsequent employee engagement surveys, a growing and remarkable body of academic and practitioner literature continues to prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, the power of an engaged workforce on superior business results.



SUMMARY

Our instrument and thinking continues its transformation to reflect our latest findings, research published by peers and our clients' evolving business requirements. Our survey instruments are constantly examined and validated to ensure relevancy. Each year, we systematically look at key psychometric properties of each survey item and explore their relationships to each other, to engagement and to business performance. The most current version of our engagement survey is TalentGage 4.0. Although the scope of this paper does not allow us to delve deep into the properties of each item, scale or index, we are always happy to share our data freely with our clients in the spirit of continual improvement and an enhanced understanding of measuring and improving employee engagement.

With a full decade of experience and more employee engagement survey projects deployed annually than any other organization in Canada, TalentMap is proud to be the standard in employee engagement solutions. The TalentMap model and approach is grounded first in business performance, backed by proven scientific research. This makes our work easier to implement and apply to corporate strategy and business interventions than our competitors. For example, a company can easily connect our 12 drivers of engagement to its key strategic initiatives, business metrics, leadership and management competencies. Our surveys are framed in business terms – focusing on management and organizational practices related to culture and leadership.

Endnotes

1. "Finding a Definition of Employee Engagement" by John Gibbons
2. Convergence Board, NY
3. "Employee Engagement and Commitment: A Guide to understanding, measuring and increasing engagement in your organization" by Robert J. Vance, Ph.D