


HOW TO ENGAGE YOUR EMPLOYEES

AN INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT GUIDE BY
AAI EMPLOYABILITY





In today's highly competitive talent market, employee engagement can make or break your company's chances of success. Creating an engaging environment for your staff, capable of inspiring, motivating, and delighting your team, has a huge range of potential benefits.

Today's top professionals are increasingly searching for meaning, empathy, and good work/life balance from the organisations they work for.

Investing in engagement is a good way to show candidates you can put their needs first.

However, employee engagement isn't just valuable for attracting new talent; it's also critical to retaining the staff members you already have. Right now, people are quitting their jobs in droves, with the average resignation rate in 2021 rising 20% higher than it was in 2020.

The challenges of the last couple of years have pushed employees to re-assess their values, and many are switching jobs to seek higher levels of engagement and satisfaction.

In this report, we'll be looking at what you can do to re-engage, retain, and delight your staff.

Joy Lewis
CEO
AAI Employability



WHAT IS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT?

An “engaged” employee is passionate about their work, invested in the success of the brand, and happy with their position in the company.

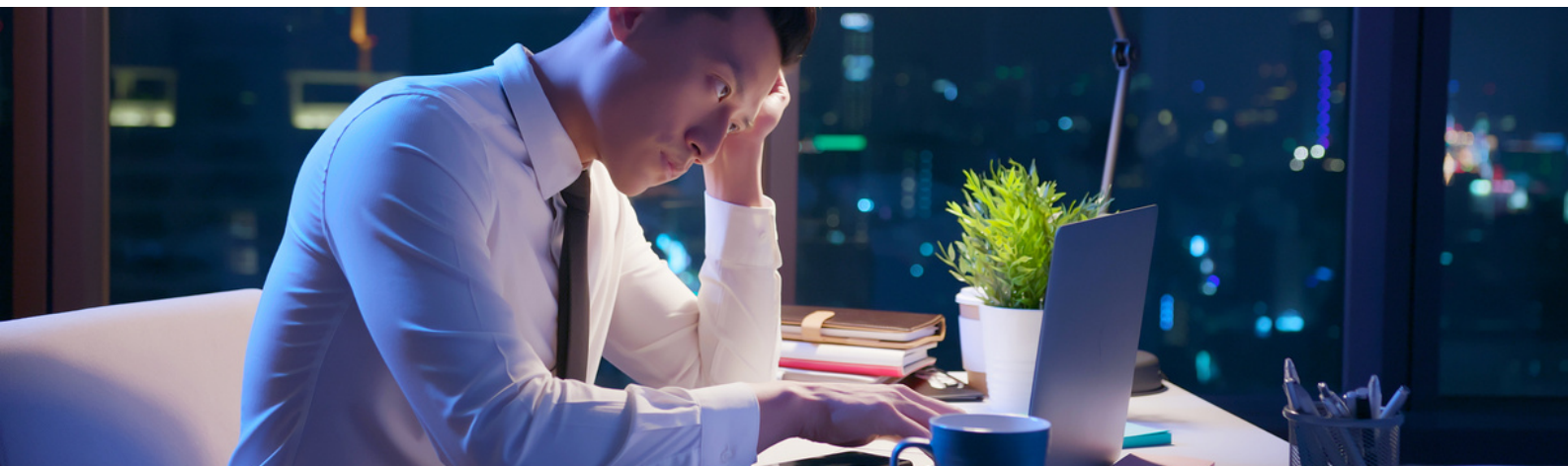
According to research, employee engagement and productivity go hand-in-hand. Engaged employees are more likely to give their all in any task, and go above and beyond to benefit the company. They're keen to prove themselves to their managers and maintain their position with the business.

There are several factors that can prompt disengagement among team members. The process of disengagement can happen over several months or years, or it could be a quick response to a significant workplace issue.

One growing issue is the presence of burnout. Jobs for many staff members are becoming more complex and demanding, leading to feelings of exhaustion and fatigue. One of the common symptoms of burnout is being disengaged in the workplace.

Other common causes of disengagement include:

- **Poor management**
- **Limited feedback**
- **Lack of workplace relationships**
- **No sense of purpose**
- **Poor communication**
- **Lack of progression**



HOW TO ENGAGE EMPLOYEES: BUILDING AN ENGAGED CULTURE

When you recognise the signs of disengagement in your employees, it's important to act fast to avoid turnover. Research tells us there are various dimensions of working life which contribute to employee engagement, from leadership strategies to workplace relationships.

For the most part, however, the best way to build engagement among employees, is to develop a company culture committed to keeping staff satisfied, healthy, and motivated at work.

Creating a culture capable of engaging employees today requires a much heavier focus on humanising the workplace. Companies need to focus on empathy, wellbeing, and flexibility, to both appeal to new employees, and retain their existing staff.

Here are some of the best ways to build a culture of engagement in your business.





1. FOCUS ON EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

According to [Accenture's research](#) into disengaged employees, one of the most common reasons engagement drops in a business is because employees feel leaders don't listen to their needs. A lack of communication in the workplace harms everything from feelings of trust and transparency to employee satisfaction levels.

Building a strategy for consistent and positive communication with your employees ensures you can keep your finger on the pulse of their experiences and expectations.

Companies can start by developing a system that makes it easy for staff members to share their feedback about the business experience anonymously. Allowing team members to make comments without the fear of judgement should ensure you can capture more authentic insights.

Leaders in the space can even send out regular surveys or questionnaires to ask their staff members how they feel about their role and what they believe they need to perform at their best.

Aside from improving communication between employees and leaders, it's also worth making sure your staff members have multiple ways to connect and build relationships. This is particularly crucial in the age of hybrid work, where remote staff can often feel isolated from the rest of the team.

Host regular video meetings and town-hall sessions where you can discuss changes in the business, or simply promote bonding between colleagues.



AROUND 72% OF BUSINESS LEADERS SAY RECOGNITION HAS A SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT.



2. PRIORITISE FEEDBACK AND RECOGNITION

Feedback is important for any staff member to ensure they can continue serving the best interests of the company. At times even negative feedback can be a good way to set expectations for team members and help them to avoid common mistakes.

Developing a strategy for consistent feedback delivered by managers and supervisors to staff members can help to create a sense of transparency and continued growth among teams.

The most important form of feedback to focus on for most companies will be positive recognition. Around 72% of business leaders say recognition has a significant influence on employee engagement. Yet countless employees feel as though they don't get enough thanks for their work.

Showing recognition to your team members when they accomplish something is an excellent way to boost their sense of "meaning" in the workplace. A simple "Thank you" sent via an email or text message can be enough to motivate staff members to continue working towards their goals.



3. START FOCUSING ON WELLBEING

Today's talent want to work for a company that cares about their needs.

According to the [CIPD's Health and Wellbeing](#) at work report, implementing wellbeing initiatives leads to a healthier, more inclusive culture in the workplace, as well as better employee morale and engagement. However, many companies still consider wellbeing a "nice-to-have" element rather than a necessity for happy employees.

Focusing on wellbeing not only improves engagement, but it can also reduce levels of absenteeism and lost productivity in the workplace.

By implementing wellbeing initiatives, you can demonstrate a level of empathy to your employees, and reduce the number of people you lose to illness. **Wellness programs can include:**

- Mental health days which allow team members to work at home when they're feeling stressed, anxious, or in need of personal space
- Mental and physical health support from specialists connected to the workplace. For instance, you could hire a counsellor to talk to staff once a month
- Strategies for work/life balance like allowing team members to change their working hours according to their needs or decide where they want to work each day



4. IMPLEMENT FLEXIBLE WORKING OPPORTUNITIES

Flexible working opportunities have become increasingly commonplace in the last couple of years. Since the pandemic, more team members have begun working from home – even on a part-time basis. Around 80% of firms in the UK have adopted some level of hybrid work.

Offering flexible working options to your employees is an excellent way to get them more invested in their roles and keep them happy at work. Staff members with the ability to work from home are often more satisfied and productive. What's more, Gallup studies show flexible work also drives engagement, making team members feel more enthusiastic about their jobs.

Speaking to team members about the kinds of flexibility they might like to see in the workplace is a great way to start planning on a new strategy. You can also track the results of your flexibility efforts to see which are paying off for your company.





5. FACILITATE AND SUPPORT EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

92% of employees believe access to professional development is very important when they're deciding where to work. What's more, employees with professional development opportunities are 15% more engaged at work, and 34% more likely to stay with the business.

According to a study by LinkedIn, 94% of employees said they would even stay with a business for longer if they knew there were opportunities for development in place. Building a culture which champions growth, learning, and opportunities is an excellent way to ensure engagement.

There are a few ways companies can adjust their culture to focus on development, such as:



Setting goals with employees:

Arranging meetings between staff members and managers where they can discuss short and long-term goals is a fantastic way to find out what your team members want to achieve.



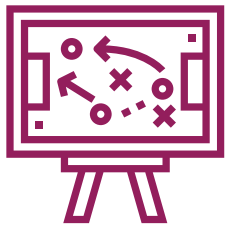
Offering training opportunities:

Finding out what your team members want to learn or which talents they want to improve and offering the right training solutions is crucial.



Providing mentorship programs:

Mentorship programs are excellent not just for encouraging a culture of learning, but also for boosting employee relationships.



6. LET TEAM MEMBERS IN ON THE BIG PICTURE

Transparency and honesty have become major factors in any employee's decision of where to work, and whether to continue working with certain brands. A common complaint among disengaged employees is they don't always know what's going on over their heads.

If your employees don't know the strategy and direction of the business, this can lead to concerns about job stability and future growth. It could also mean employees don't know which values they should be focusing on to prove themselves to their employers.

Creating a culture of "transparency", where you keep team members in the loop about major decisions made by the company, is an excellent way to encourage staff buy-in. When employees know what's happening in their business, they're more likely to feel like an important part of the team.

Around 92.4% of employees say they work better when they see how the quality of their work matters to the targets of the business.



DON'T UNDERESTIMATE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Employee engagement is crucial to the success of any business. As the preferences of employees continue to evolve, business leaders need to make sure they're tuned into what their team members really want and need.

Disengaged employees are becoming increasingly commonplace. The good news is these team members aren't necessarily a lost cause. Employing the practices and strategies above should help you to re-engage your team members and develop a company culture that both attracts and retains top talent.

Rather than simply standing by when your top workers are considering resignation, make sure you're ready to act and transform your business into the working environment the best talent is looking for.

As you continue to work on and optimise your engagement methods, you'll also want to ensure your efforts shine through in your recruitment strategy.

Highlighting the strategies you use to engage and support your employees when working with an inclusive recruitment company can make it easier for you to attract the right talent to your team.

If you would like to find out how we help our clients expand their team's diversity through innovative recruiting methods, get in touch with us.

**CONTACT US TODAY AT
AAI-EMPLOYABILITY.ORG.UK**

GET IN TOUCH WITH THE TEAM: TEAM@AAI-EMPLOYABILITY.ORG.UK

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ABOUT AAI EMPLOYABILITY



AAI is an award-winning social enterprise that supports the private, public and third sectors to access talent of all ages, skillsets and backgrounds. It also helps businesses to better attract and retain diversity.

AAI has been a highly respected name for 12 years now, offering tried, tested and flexible inclusive recruitment services from ad hoc, short-term projects, including internships and maternity leave, to permanent positions. It has worked with over 1100+ growing businesses of all sizes, including Scottish Government, the NHS, Phoenix, SMEs and an array of startups and charities.



AAI will support both employers and candidates before, during and after the post, as the need arises. It uses its surplus to support disadvantaged people and marginalised groups struggling to enter the workforce.



AAI also works with private-sector businesses offering tailored social-impact projects around the themes of gender and racial diversity, disability and supporting the third/voluntary sector. These projects are aimed at improving attraction and retention of staff as well as providing tangible and reportable social and financial impact.

ABOUT JOY LEWIS



Joy joined the Centre for Scottish Public Policy in January 2009 and spun out AAI EmployAbility (then, Adopt an Intern) a year later. The company has since gone from strength to strength, placing over 1800 graduates and returners into valuable paid work across the UK.

She served for 20 years in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and has lived and worked in Brazil, Argentina and Germany. Joy also worked for many years in fashion retail where she recruited, trained and mentored women for Sales Manager posts, culminating in a successful business in Germany.

After addressing their first employment injustice of unpaid graduate internships, Joy and the AAI team have widened their scope of inclusive employment to include diversity and inclusion services to help more businesses to grow and more talented people to access opportunity.