

The real cost of disengaged teams

— and how to fix it

What is employee engagement?

Companies often talk about engagement in broad terms — it's in their mission statements, their HR presentations, and their leadership speeches. **But what exactly is engagement?**



Engagement is the level of involvement and enthusiasm employees feel about their work and workplace.



Engagement isn't just an abstract idea: it's a measurable concept, and companies that prioritize it see clear returns, from reduced costs to stronger performance.

What's the difference between satisfaction and engagement?

The term engagement is often used in the same way as 'satisfaction,' but these two concepts have some important differences.



An employee who feels **satisfied** with their job may still not feel engaged with their work: lacking a sense of purpose, motivation, and connection.



In contrast, **truly engaged** employees feel energized by their contributions and see a clear link between their efforts and the success of the organization.



Only 23% of employees are engaged in their workplace.

Why are modern engagement rates so low?

According to Gallup, only 23% of employees are engaged in their workplace. The majority of workers are disconnected, underperforming, or even actively disengaged.

Remote and hybrid working have allowed workers to stay in touch with their team from around the world, but many employees still don't feel fully connected to their work and organizations.

The problem is, many organizations still lean on outdated practices. **Annual surveys fail to capture real-time sentiment, perks are often substituted for meaningful purpose, and communication between managers and employees is inconsistent.**

In today's competitive and often uncertain market, the cost of disengaged teams can't be ignored.



Did you know?

Highly engaged employees have **14% higher productivity** and are also more likely to stay with their company in the future.

The human cost of low engagement

Low engagement isn't
just a business issue
– it's a human one.

When people are disengaged, the effects don't just show up in performance metrics — they affect how employees feel every day. Stress levels rise, motivation declines, and the sense of belonging weakens.

Conflict escalates in disengaged environments, consuming up to 40% of a manager's time, and **employees who don't feel valued are significantly less likely to commit to their work.**

Over time, this can contribute to poor mental health and higher turnover.



Employees who don't enjoy their jobs are 75% more likely to leave.

But even employees who genuinely enjoy the work itself may leave if they don't feel engaged. If they aren't recognized, trusted, or supported, they'll eventually look for a workplace that offers them those things.

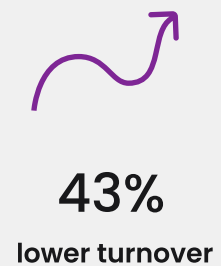
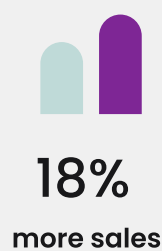
That's why companies can't leave engagement to chance. **It's their responsibility to create healthy, supportive environments where people want to stay** — workplaces where employees don't just "work" but actually thrive.

Did you know?

Engaged employees frequently outperform their coworkers, including having **70% higher wellbeing levels**.

The business cost of low engagement

According to polls by [Gallup](#), companies with highly engaged teams see:



The risks of disengagement are just as measurable:



Absenteeism. Absenteeism drains resources – engaged teams report **81% fewer absences** than disengaged ones.



Financial risks. High turnover, lost productivity, and weakened employer brands can lead to serious financial risks.



Innovation. Disengagement silences creativity and keeps companies stuck in place.

Engagement isn't just about employee happiness — it's about business survival. Companies that take engagement seriously gain an edge that competitors can't easily copy.

On the other hand, **companies that ignore engagement may face rising costs**, fading brands, and teams walking out the door just when they're needed most. Put simply:



Engagement is
the core of every
successful team.



The leadership behaviors that boost engagement

Engagement doesn't happen by accident. **It's the result of everyday leadership behaviors** that create trust, connection, and motivation.

Here are five behaviors leaders can use to transform engagement:



Make work meaningful.

Employees want to see how their work contributes to a wider purpose. Laying out clear connections to organizational goals can help create pride and ownership.



Prioritize communication.

Open communication provides clarity, reduces uncertainty, and keeps employees aligned.



Support learning and growth.

Employees are more engaged when they're able to develop new skills and see progress in their careers.



Build trust. By encouraging employees to take responsibility and propose new ideas, leaders can empower their teams.



Encourage enjoyment. Positive energy, recognition, and moments of celebration can create a culture that employees want to participate in.

It's important for leaders to **honestly evaluate what actions they're taking** to foster engagement.



“Ask yourself: when was the
last time you gave a
colleague structured
appreciation or praise? If you
haven't done it for a while,
now's the time”

– a reminder from one of our [Winningtemp](#) experts.

Did you know?

70% of engagement levels are
determined solely by the actions
of managers.

The four must-have engagement strategies

So how can companies move from theory to practice? Engagement becomes measurable and actionable when organizations put the right systems in place.

Here are four strategies that have been used successfully by many of our clients at Winningtemp:

1



Continuously listen. Replace infrequent surveys with regular actions such as monthly manager check-ins and real-time feedback channels. This enables faster responses to employee needs.

But remember that listening is only the first step. **The actions taken in response to the feedback are what make the winning difference.**

2



Show appreciation. Encourage weekly recognition from managers and peer-to-peer recognition across teams.

32% of employees say rewards and incentives outside of their salary are a key reason they stay motivated. This kind of consistent appreciation helps build a culture where employees want to stay and thrive.

3



Connect work to purpose. Break organizational goals into team-level objectives that show the direct results of employees' efforts.

Purpose-driven alignment motivates people to go beyond "just doing the job" and strengthens their commitment.

4



Invest in growth. Offer structured career development paths, dedicated learning hours, and mentorship programs.

That means supporting professional and personal growth. From formal skills training to opportunities like volunteering, these initiatives keep employees energized in their careers.

Reach out to your colleagues and listen to what they have to say. As one Winningtemp engagement expert recommends:

Ask your management team,
'what is the most important
for us now', and start by
implementing small
changes every day

Next steps for success

Engagement is not a “nice to have” — it’s what separates thriving companies from struggling ones.

When organizations commit to engagement, both people and business benefit. Engaged

employees experience better wellbeing and fewer sick days, and are more motivated overall.

Similarly, when companies prioritize engagement, they gain loyalty, profitability, and an edge in attracting top talent.

Key Takeaways



Engagement is the degree to which employees feel **committed, motivated to contribute, and aligned with organizational values.**



Leaders can build engagement through **meaningful work, communication, learning and growth, trust, and enjoyment.**



Companies that embed engagement into their culture can build both **healthier workplaces and stronger, long-term performance.**



Follow the four strategies to boost engagement: **continuously listen, show appreciation, connect work to purpose, and invest in growth.**

Companies that prioritize engagement now can be at the forefront of building workplaces where people feel inspired to stay, grow, and thrive.

And the good news is that **it's all measurable, so you can make sure your engagement strategy is always up to date and data-driven.**

Interested in what high-performing organizations are doing differently?

We've analyzed millions of data points from top-performing companies, and now we're sharing what really drives engagement, retention, and business growth. Sign up now to be among the first to get early access when it's released.

And if you're ready to put these ideas into practice, book a demo with our team to see how Winningtemp can support you.

[Sign up for early access](#)

[Book a demo](#)