

EBOOK

Solving employee disengagement

4 work environment pressures that make
your employees leave

What is employee engagement?



Employee engagement is more than employee happiness or job satisfaction—it's when employees have deep emotional commitments to both the company and its goals.

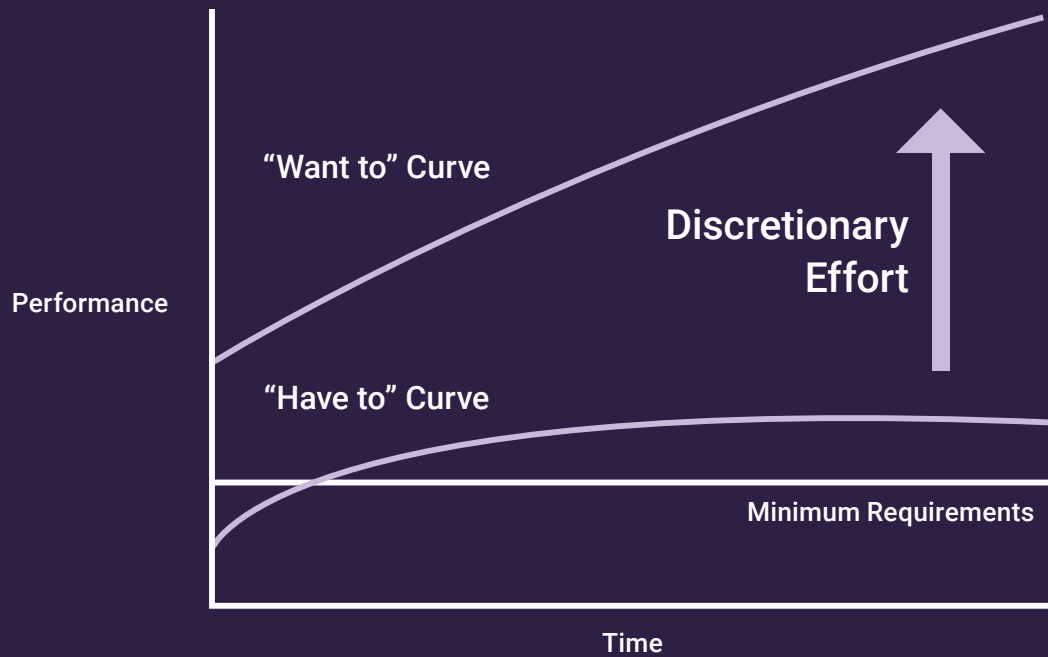
Engaged employees feel like their work is more than a job. It makes an impact. It fulfills a purpose. When employees feel this deep emotional commitment and connection to their company, they put in discretionary effort.



Discretionary effort is the effort an employee makes that goes beyond their own personal gain (i.e., getting a paycheck) and is truly for the sake of the company.

With low engagement comes low discretionary effort. Employees with low engagement usually do the bare minimum—only what their job title dictates, or only what they have to do. This mediocre effort obviously doesn't generate great results for the organization.

On the other hand, employees with high engagement want to go above and beyond—they're energized, impassioned, and committed to the company's well-being. When this occurs, we start to see some really interesting behaviors associated with discretionary effort.



When engagement is high, employees put in discretionary effort in the form of working extra hours or going the extra mile because they truly want to. Engaged employees are also thoughtful with company money and tend to work more efficiently.

Can you see why engaged employees are a boon for business?

How do you engage employees?

It's clear employee engagement is valuable to your business. But how do you engage employees?

More and more companies are starting to implement methods like real-time—or pulse—surveys and polls to track it. However, if you were to look at all the companies tracking engagement year-over-year in this way, you'll likely find that their engagement is stagnant.

You can't move the needle on engagement using a one-size-fits-all approach. Employees have different needs, motivations, and work experiences. What's creating engagement—or disengagement—can vary by person. Looking at high-level data alone won't allow you to take the actions needed to improve engagement levels and solve disengagement.

The 4 work environment pressures that cause employee disengagement

There are many work environment pressures individuals face that can impact overall employee engagement at your company. These boil down to the following four forces that destroy engagement: poor job fit, poor manager fit, poor fit with the people on the team, and poor organizational fit (meaning company culture and senior leadership).



Job fit



Manager



Organization



People



Poor job fit

Misalignment between someone's natural tendencies and their key job responsibilities

Have you ever worked a job that just didn't match your skills or personality? Perhaps it was repetitive and monotonous, but you crave variety. Or maybe it was a job that required you to crunch numbers but attention to detail isn't your strong suit.



When an employee is stuck doing a job that's a poor fit, they tend to check out pretty quickly.

You can avoid this misalignment by hiring for behavioral fit. To do this you need to understand their behavioral characteristics and the behavioral characteristics that are required of the role. For example, if you know Role A requires lots of interaction with other people, seek to hire a more extraverted candidate. (You can do this simply in the PI software using the [PI Behavioral Assessment™](#) and the PI Job Assessment™.)

No surprise, when you hire the right person for the job, you'll find they have higher performance and higher job satisfaction. They also stay longer and are generally more engaged.

In addition to paying attention to fit during the hiring process, it's necessary to continue to evaluate if an existing role is still the right behavioral fit for an employee. In rapidly changing work environments, jobs often take on new responsibilities. What a person was hired to do on day one may very well shift over time.

To avoid poor job fit as a result of evolving job duties (and the resulting disengagement), leaders must be in tune with how jobs are changing and coach employees on how to best utilize their strengths to perform. They can also go through the exercise of creating a behavioral [Job Target](#) for the "new" role to see if the employee's behavioral characteristics are still a fit.



Poor manager fit

Misalignment between manager and employee

If a manager isn't focused on inspiring their employees to be their best, they're not really managing at all. They're managing tasks—not people.

To be effective, managers need to adapt their management style to each employee's needs, drives, and behavioral preferences. This allows them to get maximum impact, engagement, and productivity out of each employee.

But how do you understand an employee's needs and drives? A workplace behavioral assessment will provide insight into what motivates an employee to perform—allowing managers to tailor their management style accordingly.

Remember the Golden Rule? “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Well, that does not apply to good people management.



If you're a manager, here's a new golden rule: 'Do unto others what motivates, excites, and engages them.'



Poor team fit

When an employee doesn't mesh with the people on their team

Lack of trust among co-workers. Uneven distribution of work. Chaotic or dysfunctional team meetings. These are all symptoms of poor employee-team fit.



When an employee feels out of place within a team, it can cause friction and lead to isolation and disengagement.

Think about someone with low extraversion in a sea of social butterflies or a detail-oriented person surrounded by a team of big-picture people with low attention-to-detail. When these behavioral differences exist, it can be difficult to find common ground, form relationships, and find the right way to work together.

It's important that both the team and the "outlier" be aware of their behavioral differences and learn how these can be used as an advantage to take the greater team forward—rather than be a cause of division.



Poor organizational fit

When employees don't align with the company's culture or senior leaders

The [2019 Employee Engagement Report](#) found that nine of the top 10 drivers of engagement relate to the organization. If an employee doesn't share your organization's mission, vision, and values, there's misalignment. And even if they do, if they don't trust senior leadership, they'll quickly become disengaged.

Imagine you have a company centered around bringing new products to market. Your company culture would likely value—and reward—innovation, agility, and risk-taking. And an employee who likes to know what to expect and exactly how to do their job might feel dreadfully out of place.

It's important to find employees who identify with your mission, vision, and values, and who are behaviorally aligned to execute your business strategy. It's also necessary to establish an organizational culture that rewards the behaviors required to successfully execute your business strategy. For example, if your culture thrives on compliance, you wouldn't want to recognize and reward employees for generating new ideas. You would, however, want to reward an employee who adheres to rules and regulations.

But even within your dominant company culture, there are likely pockets of employees who don't operate and behave according to cultural expectations. Often entire functions in a company are required to operate in their own way in order to be successful in their primary roles. Such as the accounting department in that previously mentioned innovative organization. In this case, it's necessary to understand the perspective of your employees. Translate how their role impacts the company's mission and vision—even if it doesn't look quite like the rest of the company.

The solution to engagement issues

Fixing employee engagement can feel like a daunting challenge—but not if you know where to start. And the best place to start is understanding behavior. What makes a person tick? What drives and motivates them to perform?

Unfortunately, companies spend too little time really understanding what makes their people unique and how this impacts their everyday work experience. In fact, many employees are faced with strong pressures to change who they are in order to meet the expectations of their job, manager, team, or culture.

Think about it: Have you ever felt like a square peg in a round hole at work? That's probably because you were expected to act differently than how you're naturally wired to act. This pressure can cause great strain, disengagement, and, eventually, turnover.

When you take the time to understand what drives each employee, you can better understand what's causing disengagement at work. Maybe they're not aligned with the role they're in. Maybe their boss needs to tailor their management style. Maybe they feel like a misfit on their team. Maybe the organization pushes them to act in a way contrary to their nature. Understanding these areas of misalignment is the first step in turning engagement around.

The second step is finding out for certain what's causing disengagement on both macro (company-wide) and micro (team) levels. Measure engagement across all four areas (job, manager, people, company) with the [PI Employee Experience Survey™](#).

Let's be real: Engagement is infectious. Disengaged people breed more disengagement. Similarly, as people become more engaged, engagement starts to exponentially increase throughout an organization. Over time, you'll experience a healthier company that has the ability to achieve more and reach new heights—and who doesn't want that?

Get your engagement score.

Take our engagement diagnostic and see how your company rates on a scale of 1-100.

[GET YOUR SCORE](#)

