

Guide

L&D Best Practices

Closing the Employee Engagement Gap:

How Top Companies Are Improving Engagement Through Employee-Centric Initiatives

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The (Hard) Reality of Employee Engagement Numbers

Despite all the efforts deployed during the pandemic, businesses are still looking for effective ways to keep employees happy and loyal. The numbers are staggering and recent research seems to suggest that we are living through a crisis of employee engagement. According to Gallup, only 21% of the global workforce is engaged at work. The pandemic-driven wave of resignations and the more recent phenomenon known as “quiet quitting” confirm that employees feel disconnected from their work, and they are either leaving their jobs or just coasting while doing the bare minimum.

A disengaged workforce costs money. Gallup states that the global economy has lost \$7.8 trillion to disengagement last year. For organizations that want to succeed and innovate in the new reality of work, employee engagement should be a top priority.

\$7.8 trillion

is the amount of money the global economy lost to disengagement last year.

14%

of European workers are engaged at work, the lowest of any region.

33%

of American and Canadian workers are engaged, the highest of any region, but still low.

Source: Gallup. State of the Global Workplace: 2022 Report

Closing the Employee Engagement Gap with Learning

In order to feel engaged, an employee needs to understand their role and purpose within the organization, to know where and how they fit in. It's the employer's job to make sure this happens.

Learning is one of the primary tools that organizations can use to boost employee engagement. Employees need proper training in their roles to feel they are in a position to contribute to business outcomes. They also want more autonomy over their personal and professional development to feel confident and satisfied. This results in a stronger connection to work and, therefore, better performance.

But the kind of learning matters. If it is to be effective, learning needs to be engaging and genuinely relevant to employees. It should give them practical

94%

of employees would stay at a company longer if it invested in their career development.

tools to fuel their career journey and their personal lives. Learning should be available throughout their career, from onboarding through to retirement. A platform that just offers a lot of content is unlikely to get the job done.

7 L&D Initiatives* Top Companies Use to Drive Employee Engagement

1. Organize Learning Around a “Learning Festival”

This initiative takes the form of a planned break from regular business operations, where employees focus purely on digital learning and networking with each other to update essential skills to meet business challenges. Digital group learning programs and activities supported by robust, widely available digital training can build team spirit while upskilling the workforce. Though digital training is available year-round, the Learning Festival serves as an annual event around which learning can be organized and encouraged.

Real-world example: The Learning Festival is a concept successfully implemented at the energy company ENGIE in October 2020. ENGIE’s Learning Festival lasts five days and takes place in multiple languages across several time zones. The Festival serves three main objectives – to increase learning opportunities for individuals, provide personalized development paths for all, and develop a culture of continuous learning.

The benefits:

- Massive access to digital training
- Develop a sense of belonging and team spirit

* These initiatives have been presented during think tank meetings promoted by L&D Impact Lab in France.

2. Challenge-Based Learning

Challenge-based learning is a pedagogical approach to digital learning based on solving a problem. The process involves bringing people together in (virtual) groups and presenting them with a challenge to solve using social learning. By setting a specific start and end date with pre-set tasks, people can work on them as their time and availability allow. In addition, storytelling can make your challenge much more engaging.

This approach lets learners acquire skills and know-how proactively based on the problem or scenario submitted. It also helps them maintain skills in their area of expertise while allowing them to acquire new skills from their peers.

The benefits:

- Foster team collaboration
- Develop soft skills
- Help identify leading profiles

Real-world example: In 2019, Bolloré Transport & Logistics used this method to develop a training academy for 500 financiers around the globe. By leveraging storytelling, this challenge-based program helped learners to get familiar with the digital platform, as well as the available content, in a fun and memorable way.

3. Gamification

Gamification is a training methodology that applies the rewards and goal-based achievements of video games to digital learning. The methodology requires an engaging and fun online experience that encourages the learner to adopt skills or behaviors based on challenges, rankings, points, or grades according to the achievement of specific objectives.

Real-world example: The French energy giant Alstom used this methodology to launch their “We Share the Power” initiative in which employees used this participatory approach to find new ways to lower electricity use and reduce the carbon footprints at their facilities.

The benefits:

- Capture the learner's attention and increase training engagement
- Better learning retention
- Encourage healthy competition

4. Reverse Mentoring

Reverse mentoring is a revolutionary methodology that relies on younger workers who are digital natives to encourage cultural change in organizations. It works by pairing these tech-savvy workers with senior managers in a mentor / mentee relationship that encourages the intergenerational exchange of ideas. The younger worker can impart the newest digital skills and habits to their mentee while benefiting from the older worker's experience.

Real-world example: Total began their reverse mentoring experiment in 2016 to great effect. To date a full third of the company's managers have participated, including the CEO.

The benefits:

- Support digital transformation
- Break down silos and streamline internal exchanges and communication
- Empower and retain junior employees

5. Create an Internal Trade & Skills Fair

The internal trade & skills fair methodology brings together employees in a showcase of the skills they need to succeed today and into the future. In a top-down approach, managers in HR, communications, and IT help employees envision their own professional development and the skills they'll need to achieve their goals.

Real-world example: This approach was successfully used by Orange France to bring together more than 30 leaders and 400 employees to exchange ideas on achieving business goals with new skills and technologies.

The benefits:

- Allow employees to project themselves and stakeholders to capitalize on productions
- Respond to the challenge of tomorrow's skills – emergence of data, AI, cybersecurity, etc. – and the job-related changes (sales, network, etc.)

6. eDoing

The eDoing methodology combines small practical challenges that are completed some time after a training session with a learning algorithm that continually refines and personalizes these challenges. The challenges can be completed individually or as teams, and users can track their progress and target the behaviors they want to turn into long-term habits. Once they complete a course, learners will have a clear vision of their progress and, with

the guidance of their manager, can decide on the next step of their professional development.

Real-world example: The company Orange used this methodology successfully when it developed an eDoing platform to train its managers in leadership best practices, achieving an 80% usage rate with high user satisfaction.

The benefits:

- Better learning and knowledge retention
- Optimize ROI of training
- Engage learners in their learning journeys

7. Virtual Classes and Facilitated Learning

Unlike learning modules that are available any time learners want them, this methodology is more rigidly structured with face-to-face online learning led by a trainer. Much like traditional classroom learning, multiple learners can communicate with each other, participate in interactive projects, and share documents and ideas. With this kind of face-to-face e-learning, the methodology encourages communication and interaction, while promoting team integration.

Real-world example: Many organizations have experienced better results after adding a virtual classroom element to their non-mandatory learning. Legrand improved their completion rate by 30% compared to training paths without the virtual

classroom. In another example, employees at Alstom were more likely to recommend non-mandatory learning that includes this method (+11 points in their NPS). CrossKnowledge has seen an increase of +13 points in their global NPS since adding virtual classroom learning.

The benefits:

- Foster a stronger sense of belonging
- Improve learner engagement
- Boost learner interaction without the costs associated with face-to-face training

Conclusion

After two years of pandemic and working from home, the modern workforce has changed. Employees have new expectations for the workplace and understand their value and place in their organizations. Millions have left jobs to start new careers and pursue other opportunities. Millions more have become disengaged from their jobs and need new motivation to go above and beyond.

Learning and development is a vital and effective way to improve engagement and retain talent. Companies that want to get the best from their people should invest in the initiative that best fits their needs. Fortunately, there are many different methodologies that are effective and readily available. This guide was designed to give you a short tour of the options you can use to improve employee engagement —just pick the one that works best for your business and start strategizing!

Nurture the connection between your people and your business with effective learning.

Our experts can show you how