

# Engaging Employees to Do Great Work, Happily!



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## Happy Brain Science

Engaged employees are enthusiastic about their jobs and organizations; they go the extra mile for their employer. Engagement leads to improved productivity, quality, retention, and profits. So how do you get, or become, an engaged employee? In this session you will learn concrete techniques to raise engagement.

**Page 2 – Activities** ----- Throughout the workshop, you will participate in several activities; the activity sheets are located in this section.

**Page 5 – Talk Summary** ----- Some brains are distracted by taking notes, but want notes to refer to later.

**Page 6 – Take-Away Sheet** ----- After the session, feel free to remove and use this sheet of reminders and resources.

## Activities

### Create SMARTTEST Goals

**Exercise:** set clear expectations through specific, meaningful goals:

1. Pick a goal that you would like to clarify and make more meaningful. This could be your own goal, or one that you've discussed with an employee. Whose goal will you write down?
2. Write down the goal as it stands now:
3. Now edit that goal to make it SMARTTEST:  
**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant, **T**ime-bound, **E**ducational, **S**ignificant, and **T**oward

### Start with Why

**Discuss:** Start with why. In small groups, discuss: what do you do at work? More importantly, why do you do the work? Why this work and not a different industry? Why does this work mean something to you? What do you believe?

### Best Possible Future

**Exercise: Share your best possible future** for three years from now at work. This can't be a total fantasy, but sharing, or even better, writing down your best *possible* future boosts optimism and engagement, and gives you a compelling vision of where you are heading. Having each of your employees write down their best possible future is a great start to conversations about how people want to learn and grow.

### Know Your Team

**Exercise:** List out colleagues you work with regularly. Next to each name, include one or more personal things you know about that colleague.

## Engagement Action Plan

*Instructions:* Choose the most important actions from above for you to act on with your colleagues. Below, write down the steps you choose, and be specific about how you will apply them. Choose a person you trust with whom to review this plan (I know this may sound awkward to some, but reviewing your plan with another person will help you follow through on the change you desire). Ask for help: Does the plan seem like a good one to them? Will they help you track your progress and remind you to act on your plan? Acting on your plan fairly often will make a difference in your happiness and job performance. If you lead others, you might also create a plan like this with each of your reports.

<b>My personal engagement plan. To be more engaged at work, my most important next steps are:</b>	<b>When and where I will act on this:</b>
1)	
2)	

*Research shows you may be more likely to follow through on a plan when you share it publicly, and ask others to hold you accountable. Consider sharing your plan with your friends and colleagues, in person or online.*

## Talk Summary

Engagement is an emotional commitment to work that results in increased effort, performance, and quality of work life. Data suggests that organizations with highly engaged employees enjoy over double the financial success of organizations with low engagement. That higher financial success is fueled by significantly higher employee performance and customer satisfaction, and much lower turnover. Gallup, Kenexa, other companies, and academic researchers have provided us with a large amount of data, telling us what most consistently makes a difference. For most people, most of the time, you need *all* of the following working together to get an engaged employee.

### Engage your employees to do great work by minding the GAPs:

#### Goals:

- Set clear expectations. Co-create goals with your employees that are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound). Now work on making those goals personally meaningful.

#### Alignment:

- Talk with employees to ensure they understand and value how their work fits into the big picture.
- Be honest, open, and transparent. Earn trust with small wins, doing what you say, and doing the right things with integrity.
- Set quality standards, don't accept low quality work, and reward high quality work. Ensuring that everyone is committed to doing quality work further drives engagement.
- Align assignments to use people's strengths. When employees use their strengths, they deliver better work and are more satisfied with their jobs.

#### Progress:

- Provide reasonable goals and deadlines. Give employees the tools and resources they need to make progress and reach the goals you have set together. Progress fuels engagement and enjoyment.
- Take time to talk to employees about their progress. Help to remove or work around roadblocks.
- Celebrate and even savor progress—not just the final completion of goals.

#### Growth:

- Schedule regular career growth discussions with members of your team to learn what they need and how you can best support their growth. Engagement is earned through meaningful career planning and growth. Different people grow differently. Some will benefit most from books, others from conferences or new job assignments.

#### Appreciation:

- Show your appreciation for employees with specific gratitude expressed in a variety of ways. The vast majority of us are motivated by recognition. Again, different employees may value different forms of recognition. For one person, a public comment is much appreciated, and for another a private word is more valued. Talk to employees and celebrate their good work in a way that suits them.
- Solicit and respond to input from employees. Engaged employees feel their opinions are valued. By soliciting thoughts from employees, you'll get engagement as well as innovative ideas.

#### People:

- Treat employees like real human beings with emotions!
- Take time to connect on a personal level that feels right for each employee.
- Remember HMMM – Human Managers Matter Most.

## Increase Engagement by Minding the GAPS:



**G: Goals**  
**A: Alignment**  
**P: Progress**

**G: Growth**  
**A: Appreciation**  
**P: People**

### Goals:

Set clear expectations.

### Alignment:

Talk with employees to ensure they understand and value how their work fits into the big picture. Communicate to align on quality and strengths.

### Progress:

Give people enough resources, remove roadblocks, visualize progress, and celebrate and savor progress.

### Growth:

Help employees learn and grow their own way.

### Appreciation:

Feel and express specific gratitude in a variety of ways.

### People:

Treat people like human beings. Remember HMMM: Human Managers Matter Most.

### Engagement – Measure, Discuss, Act, Repeat

## Engagement Resources

### Recommended Reading:

**12: The Elements of Great Managing** by Rodd Wagner & Kames K. Harter, Ph.D.

**We: How to Increase Performance and Profits through Full Engagement** by Rudy Karsan and Kevin Kruse

**The Progress Principle** by Teresa Amabile and Steven Kramer

**Employee Engagement 2.0** by Kevin Kruse

Article: **Go Beyond SMART to SMARTEST Goals** by Scott Crabtree

For more:

[www.HappyBrainScience.com/RecommendedReading](http://www.HappyBrainScience.com/RecommendedReading).

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– Scott Crabtree, Chief Happiness Officer