

# Top Strategies to Foster Employee Engagement



In the age of technology and the rise of the [remote worker](#), employers the world over are finding it harder and harder and to keep people engaged. Even though the days of the “company man” still exist, the concept is becoming less and less prevalent. This is largely due to the fact that changing jobs, or even careers, multiple times is no longer seen with the same disdain it once was. As a result, employers are having to get more creative about not only retaining top talent, but keeping them engaged. If you find yourself with a revolving door of quality people coming and going, you might want to consider some of the following strategies.

## What Makes Employees Feel Engaged?

Before you start thinking about how to keep employees engaged, you have to understand what the term means to them.

Recent research tells us that three words define what it means for an employee to feel engaged. Money isn't one of them. **Community, Value and Security.**

### Community

Employees need to feel that they're included in the process. Being included in important meetings, asked for their input and communication all go a long way. Bottom line, if something important is going on, everyone needs to be kept in the loop.

# Value

In order for employees to feel valued, they need to know that their work is important. This is why regular feedback, even if it's constructive goes a long way. If someone does an exceptional job, let them know. Even just a short email or compliment goes a long way.

# Security

This is a big one. With the prevalence of corporate takeovers and mergers, employees spend a lot of time on edge and looking over their shoulder. They're never sure when their position might be eliminated, or their head will be on the chopping block. If you want to keep people around and fully engaged, let them know that they don't have anything to worry about. Retirement plans, benefits, sales incentives, etc. all go a long way in easing employees' minds.

Now that we've defined what engagement means to people, let's discuss the best ways to keep them engaged.

# Give People a Voice

Remember those surveys that companies would send out once a year to every employee to get their feedback? Those don't cut it anymore. Employees today, especially [Millennials and Gen Z](#), crave sharing of information, thoughts and ideas. That's why it's a good idea to have a central hub for communication not only within departments but between them. This space should be treated as a judgement-free zone. Sure, there are professional lines that need to be adhered to. But, employees should be able to be candid and share ideas and feedback freely.

# Listen

It's any employee's job to listen to their boss. That goes without saying. But, guess what? It's also your job as a boss to listen to your employees. If an employee raises a concern or comes up with a good idea, consider what they have to say and put it into action. When people see that their ideas add value to an

organization, they feel like they matter.

## **Everyone Learns Differently**

There's a lot being made about different learning styles. And for good reason. Some people learn by watching and listening. Others, by doing. That's why it's imperative to accommodate everyone and how they learn. The days of reading a job description and the employee handbook are gone. For people to be engaged, they need you to be an active part of the process. It's your job to identify their learning style and curtail your teachings accordingly. If you want to get the most out of your people, make their learning a top priority.

## **Creative Group Learning Sessions**

You're all too familiar with the typical company training that involves a Power Point and a manager talking in front of a group. These can be impactful but, it's easy for them to become stale. An alternative is to do learning sessions in a way that involves and challenges everyone. You can get really creative here and have a lot of fun. An example might be dividing a team into groups to accomplish a certain task. Within a particular group, put someone that is shy or reserved in a position of leadership. While it might be uncomfortable for that person, you're challenging them to step outside their comfort zone. These kinds of learning activities can be a real catalyst for individual and collective growth.

There's no question that retaining quality people is harder now than ever before. The workforce has become smarter, values have changed, and technology has made it easier for people to do their job without being fully engaged. Sure, money is always a motivating factor for employees. More than anything though, they want to feel a sense of community, value and security. If you find yourself struggling to keep people around and excited about their work, try implementing some of these strategies. You just might be surprised by the results.

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# Questions Career Hungry Employees Ask Their Boss



When the workplace is more competitive than it ever has been, you have to work extra hard to set yourself apart. Sure, results speak for themselves. There's no question that high performers stand out for a reason. But what if you're a high performer but don't have a close relationship with your colleagues or boss? What if your priorities aren't fully aligned with those of your company? We all know that person in the office... The one that can sell, win over clients and exceed every KPI imaginable. That same person never seems to last in one place for very long. And there's a reason. There's the matter of how you go about achieving those results and learning along the way.

What's the best way to start? Your relationship with your boss. If you want to advance your career, consider the questions below that you should ask your boss.

## What do You Need Help With?

It doesn't happen enough. People reaching out to see how they can help. In fact, when it does happen, you're often so caught off guard you don't know how to respond. Guess what? When you ask your boss this question, they'll be taken aback because no one has ever asked them before.

In most cases when you ask this question, you're likely to end up with some tasks that your boss just doesn't enjoy doing. They might be menial in his or her eyes, but they're your responsibility now. And you should treat them as important as anything else you do.

This question and assumption of responsibility will show your boss that you're loyal, dedicated and eager to learn.

## **What are Your Main Objectives and Concerns?**

You probably notice a pattern with these first two questions - they're both boss-centric. It's a far cry from brown-nosing if you ask them in a genuine way. When you make yourself available and demonstrate a want to learn, you immediately build trust and loyalty.

The truth for most effective bosses is, they're always looking for their replacement. Some might communicate but, most just observe.

So, the only way for you to know if you're seriously being considered for mentorship is to ask. Ask what your boss' primary goals and objectives are. Once you have a solid understanding, it's your job to help them get there.

## **How do You Communicate**

It's easy for your boss to stress the importance of adapting to different communication styles. Guess what, though? He or she has their own preferred communication style in the office. This is their default way of getting tasks done. And, it's your job to figure it out.

When you ask your boss what their preferred method of communication is, you position yourself to solidify a relationship.

If you can solve this equation, you'll be way ahead of everyone else.

## **Who Do You Need to Cultivate Relationships With?**

Ask any CEO how they achieved their success, and their answer will always come down to relationships. True story, even in the age of technology. Remember that guy we talked about in the opening? He's always changing jobs because he

doesn't have the relationships to keep one for very long.

Take the time to learn how your boss got to where he or she is. Who did they look up to? Who did they seek out as mentors? Who did they avoid?

These are all important questions within a broader question. But, when someone you respect is willing to share a playbook to their success, you should listen.

The key is asking. You'll never know otherwise.

## **What Skills do I Need to Develop?**

You're hungry. You're determined to succeed. But, you're also raw. If you're asking your boss the questions above, he or she already knows this. That's only the start, though. You have to be coachable and humble.

The next step is taking the right steps to improve your current performance and set yourself up for future success.

Bring a notepad with you and jot everything down. At this point, you have an opportunity that most folks don't get. Time to make the most of it.

During your one-on-one, ask leading questions about your performance. Then listen. Ask more focused questions. And listen again.

Your time here is limited, so make it count.

Once you've gathered all the data and reviewed your notes, formulate a game plan and review it your boss. Then, put it into action.

There's no questioning that you have to perform to survive climbing the corporate ladder. At the end of the day, it does come down to results. No one is going to deny that. However, if your goal is to stay with the right company for you, it's imperative that you develop the skills and relationships necessary to do so. There's no better place to start than your boss or manager. Afterall, if they agree to become a mentor for you, they will want you to succeed as much as you do since their training will be a reflection on both of you. If you feel inspired to achieve their success or beyond, ask the right questions, listen, and execute.

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# Breaking Bad Habits at Work



Virtually everyone is guilty of it. And that most likely includes you if you're reading this article. What are we talking about? Bad habits at work that keep you from being your most productive and efficient. Whether it's lack of organization, being easily distracted or being late, these bad habits cost you time and make it harder to get all your tasks done during the day. The good news is you're not alone and there are some simple steps you can take to identify your bad habits and correct them.

## Take Inventory

Before you can fix a problem, you have to know what it is. When it comes to counterproductive tendencies at work, you should start by taking inventory of your day. Do you show up on time? How much time do you spend multitasking? Is your desk a mess? Do Facebook and LinkedIn suck you in?

Once you've honestly identified some areas where you can improve, you need to adopt the mindset that you're willing and ready to change.

## Baby Steps

After you've given some serious thought to your bad habits and written them down, you might find yourself overwhelmed with all the ways you can do your job better. The key to enacting change however is to start with just one habit. Even if

it's something as small as getting to work on time, put all your focus on just one habit. Once you prove to yourself that you're able to make a single change, you'll be surprised how motivated you are to tackle the next obstacle.

## **Replacements**

When it comes to habits that involve wasting time, it's easy to say "I'm not going to look at Facebook at work anymore." But what are you going to do with all that newfound time? If you're going to break a bad habit, you need to have a plan what you're going to replace it with. Some ideas might be catching up on paperwork or listening to an industry relevant podcast with that extra 30 minutes.

## **Be Patient**

There's a famous study that says it takes 21 days to change a habit. This is just one study though. Some people can make changes faster and it can take longer for others. The key to enacting lasting change is to be patient. You're going to have setbacks and you're going to slip up, it's inevitable. If you're patient with yourself though, you'll be able to stay on track.

## **Reward Yourself**

Who doesn't like being rewarded? Once you've accomplished the goal of making a change, reward yourself. Sure, you should do something to celebrate at the end, but it's important to reward yourself along the way too. Maybe your goal on a daily basis is to not check social media before lunch. If you make it, spend a few minutes checking your newsfeed while you eat, just don't get carried away.

## **Plan for Setbacks**

We all have triggers. Whether it's missing a project goal or not getting the promotion you were in line for, you're going to want to revert back to old habits that are unproductive. That's why having some coping mechanisms in place is so important. When things don't go your way, maybe you're tempted to close your door and watch YouTube videos the rest of the day. Instead, maybe all you need is a walk around the block or to talk to someone to avoid slipping back into old



ways.

## **Make Yourself Accountable**

Nothing helps you stay accountable like telling the people around you what you're trying to accomplish. Maybe it's not drinking after work. When you state your goal to your co-workers, they'll know not to invite you to happy hour. And if they do catch you at the pub, you'll have to answer to them.

## **Use Technology**

As much as technology can be blamed for your bad habits, it can help too. Try setting your phone to go straight to voicemail. Turn off the text and email alerts for set periods of time. Doing simple things like these keeps you from getting distracted and allows you to focus solely on the task at hand.

Whether we want to admit it or not, there are things we can all do to make better use of our time at work. Even though making meaningful change can be hard, the benefits are almost always worthwhile. If you take time to identify some areas where you can improve, adopt a "can-do" attitude and employ some of the strategies above, you'll be amazed by the results you can achieve in a short time.

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## **Accepting Temp Work when You are Seeking a Permanent Position**



If you're like most Americans, you're going to switch careers or employers at least four times in your life. When this happens and you're not sure of your next move, the uncertainties and unknowns can be stressful. What if you have to relocate? Do you have enough money to get by in the interim? How long will it take to land another position? Are you qualified enough for the type of job you want? The questions are endless. With that said, one of the most important things to consider is what do you do in the meantime? Obviously, you're going to look for new opportunities. But what if a temporary offer comes along? Should you take it? Or will it distract you from looking for something long term? It's a tough decision but we have some ideas.

## **Reality**

Although taking a temp assignment or two isn't what you want to do for the rest of your life, it might not be the worst idea. The reality is that more and more, employers are looking to hire contract workers because they don't have to offer employee benefits that hurt their bottom line. As a result, it might take you longer than you'd like to find that lucrative fulltime position with all the extras you're after.

## **Financial Help**

Even if you're set and can survive for a while without a salary, it's a comfort knowing that you can rely on some steady income at least for a while. As much as you might not like it, you have to think in both the short term and long term. That's especially true when it comes to your savings. Even if you have enough money to get by for a few months, not having to burn through it in the short term means you won't have to replenish it later on.

# Opportunity to Learn and Grow

We get it, taking a temporary position might bruise your ego a bit. But guess what, more often than not these opportunities give you a chance to learn something new, refine your skills and get paid. Let's be honest, adding new skills and more experience to your resume is never a bad thing.

# No Employment Gap

Because employers are hiring more temporary or contract workers, it can take longer to find permanent employment when you're looking for a new job. And guess what? When you finally go to apply for that permanent position, the [hiring manager](#) doesn't want to see any significant gaps on your resume. That's another way temporary work can help. Instead of having to explain why you've been unemployed for 10 months, you can show that you've kept your skills sharp until the right opportunity came along.

# Networking

Even as a temporary employee, you're going to have the chance to meet and work closely with people in an organization. As you build professional relationships and prove your worth, others are going to notice. These folks know other people and can prove to be a great resource in connecting you with their networks and be great references down the road.

# It Might Lead to Something Permanent

It's amazing how many times temporary gigs turn into full-time positions. What starts out as a three-month contract to implement a new project or handle a spike in workload often times turns into a permanent role with a pay raise and benefits. The logic is pretty simple. Organizations prefer to hire internally when a new position comes open. Even if you're on a contract for a limited time, you will already have been thoroughly vetted and given the opportunity to prove yourself. So, as long as you put forth your best effort and get results, you never know what might happen.

Temporary work is just that, temporary. And sure, you're going to want to find something permanent after a while. But is it really all that bad? Would you rather spend your time between jobs worrying and draining your bank account or sharpening your skills and gaining valuable experience? At the end of the day, temp work might not be your dream job. But if you're willing to swallow your pride and seize the opportunity, the experience can prove to be a catalyst to propel you in the right direction.

If you are an experienced employee in the [Life Sciences industries](#), contact me, Jeff King for help finding a high quality position in the [pharmaceutical, medical device or biotech fields](#). I am here to help. You can reach me at [jking@rqfocus.com](mailto:jking@rqfocus.com) or (541) 639-3501.

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## The Fine Line of Being a Boss and Friend



A lot has changed in the workplace since your father spent his 30 years being a company man. It used to be that bosses were just that, bosses. They commanded respect, called all the shots, were imposing and held your livelihood in their hands. The boss was the last guy you wanted to piss off.

While some things remain the same, there's a lot that's changed too. Sure, the boss is still the person in charge. But, if you're in a position of leadership, you've probably realized that how you go about your business and interact with the people you manage is vastly different from the model of old. Instead of barking

orders, handing out disciplinary actions and leading by fear, you now have to play the part of mentor, friend, confidant and communicator. If it sounds like you have to be both a boss and friend in order to be an effective leader in the modern workplace, it's because it's true.

## Honesty

If you think about your closest friends, it's expected that you're honest with each other. The same goes for your relationships at work. If an employee isn't making the grade, they need to know. Keep in mind that when you deliver constructive criticism, you need to both be tactful and not beat around the bush. Your employees want honesty and transparency and it's your job to deliver it.

The same holds true for [communicating with employees](#) when they go above and beyond. If you notice someone performing exceptionally well, by all means let them know. At the end of the day, you're expected to be candid with your feedback both positive and constructive.

## There's No "I" in Team

You're the one in charge, that's a fact. But guess what? You're in charge of a team. In order for your organization to perform optimally, it has to be a total team effort. That means creating the space for everyone's voice to be heard in the decision-making process. When issues arise, it's imperative that you solicit feedback from everyone. Sure, some people's ideas won't be realistic, but the mere fact that they had a chance to be heard means the world and also helps them get on board with the final decision. At least they were heard.

## Hang Out

There's an ongoing debate about crossing professional lines when it comes to socializing and recreating with colleagues. The old guard maintains that work should stay at the office while the new school of thought encourages social interaction outside the office. While there's no defined line, studies have shown that engaging with your colleagues in a relaxed environment humanizes the experience and can actually be a catalyst for innovative ideas and candid conversations without fear of reprimand. So, maybe that Friday happy hour isn't

such a bad idea after all.

BUT, the terms change when it comes to social media. It's absolutely fine to endorse someone for a skill on LinkedIn. However, overly engaging and Facebook and Instagram is never a good idea. First, doing so can be seen as an invasion of privacy. Second, if you're the boss that "creeps" or "pries," you liable to stir a hornet's nest and open yourself up to all sorts of negative accusations and outcomes. It can become an HR nightmare.

## **Keep it Professional**

We've all heard stories about working relationships becoming more... And by more we mean romantic. Though it goes without saying, this is something that's worth repeating. Even if there's an energy, mutual attraction, shared interests or whatever, mixing work with pleasure is never a good idea. The conflicts of interest, propensity for office rumors and not to mention people's lives are at stake. So please, don't let interoffice romance ruin your career or someone else's.

## **Be Supportive and Empathetic**

Everyone that works for you is human. And with that experience comes hard times on occasion. If someone on your team is going through a tough divorce, the loss of a loved one or any other personal struggle, you need to be there for them. Maybe you're the only one they can talk to in a moment of need. Just the simple act of listening can be more meaningful than you might think.

If someone you manage comes to you and asks for help or advice, it's your duty to assist however you can. Not only is it the decent thing to do, it can often be the difference in the employee continuing to perform or not making the grade, or even deciding to stay with the company or look for other opportunities.

It's a fine line you're going to have to walk as a leader. The line between boss and friend. There's no plug-and-play formula that shows you exactly how to do it. With that being said, if you make a conscious effort to stay within professional bounds while showing everyone on your team that you're a human just like them, your entire organization only stands to benefit.

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# How To Manage Stress at Work



Have you ever thought how nice it would be to work in Spain where your day starts mid-morning, you take lunch a couple hours later and then enjoy a siesta? Even though that leisurely Monday through Friday routine sounds wonderful, your workday reality is probably quite the opposite. If you're like most Americans, your typical day at the office involves getting there early, eating at your desk, running from one meeting to another and working late. Maybe you're even there on weekends. By the end of the week all the stress leaves you on empty mentally, physically and emotionally. While stress isn't going away anytime soon, there are some simple measures you can take to manage it.

## Don't Gossip

Every office has that person that makes it their duty to know about everyone else's business. They know that Bob is going through a nasty divorce, Julie has her eyes on that promotion and Mike has been subject to disciplinary action. Even worse, they make it a habit of sharing all these tidbits with everyone around them. Even though you might be tempted to learn some juicy little nugget, nothing good ever comes of it. Before you know it, you're embroiled in a nasty game of he said she said that can lead to damaged relationships and bring down the morale of everyone in the organization.

# Start Your Day Fresh

This goes back to the night before and making sure you get enough sleep. Once you're up and about, give yourself the time you need to properly start your day. Incorporating habits into your morning routine like meditation, journaling and getting some physical exercise help you arrive at the office with a clear head and positive attitude making it easier to handle stress the rest of the day.

# Keep Your Desk Clean

How many times have you come into the office knowing where you left off the day before but unable to find the right report buried in the pile of papers on your desk? You go about frantically searching high and low trying to make sense of where everything is at and before you know it, you're stressed out before you get anything done.

All it takes to avoid this type of chaos is a little tidying up when you're done with your day. Not only will this habit reduce your level of stress in the morning, it will increase your productivity as well. It also helps you mentally to start "disconnecting" from work, which can also reduce work related stress.

# Avoid Multitasking

The distractions you face at work are untold. Between notifications, email alerts, phone calls and interruptions from colleagues, it's amazing we're able to get anything done at all. And guess what all the constant stimulation does? Increases stress. If you want to maintain your focus throughout and reduce stress, focus on only one project at a time. Everything else will be there when you're done and you'll get a sense of accomplishment instead of feeling like you have several things hanging.

# Know What's Expected

One of the biggest contributors to stress in the workplace is not knowing what you're expected to do. This can be as simple as a poorly written job description or inadequate communication from the top. Whatever the case, it's almost



impossible to do your job when you don't know what you don't know. If you find yourself in this position, be proactive and schedule a meeting with your supervisor to discuss what's missing and the problems you're having. If done in a respectful manner, this conversation often lowers stress for both parties and can also save you some time by focusing on what you know needs to be done.

## **Take Breaks**

There's someone you work with that spends the entire day in their office. They only times they get up from their desk are you use the restroom and microwave lunch. You know who this person is. They're probably dead serious 100% of the time, seemed stressed and maybe even unhappy. Now think about the people that get out of the office at lunch and take short breaks throughout the day. It's not that the latter doesn't care about their job. Rather, they realize the importance of staying physically and mentally fresh. You might think that the desk jockey gets a lot more done each day but, it's almost always the opposite.

So, whenever you feel stressed or overwhelmed, take a short break to stand up, leave your office and move around. Getting away from a problem or project for a little bit when you're stressed will help give you a new perspective, which in many cases reduces the stress and may even allow more creativity to finding a solution to the problem. When you come back, you'll find yourself ready to tackle whatever is in front of you with a clear mind.

As much as we'd all love it, stress in the workplace isn't going away anytime soon. It's how you manage and handle the stress that makes all the difference. If you're not careful, stress can affect your productivity, relationships with everyone around you and even your health. But, if you take some actionable steps to manage and reduce stress, you'll find yourself happy, healthy and maximizing your potential day in and day out.

As a Life Sciences recruiter for the pharmaceutical, biotech, and medical device industries, I can help optimize your work place by building an efficient team. A great team will work together well and decrease stress in the workplace. Contact me, Jeff King at [jking@rqfocus.com](mailto:jking@rqfocus.com) or (541) 639-3501.

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# Best Ways to Boost Your Focus on Demand



Some people are doing it. As crazy as it sounds, they're videotaping themselves in the office for a day to see how much time they waste. And what those that have dared to take on this little experiment have found is pretty staggering. Between, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, checking fantasy football scores, email and cell phones, there's a lot of time that is just flat out wasted during the day. It shouldn't come as much of a surprise either. But, in a time when demands in the workplace are at an all-time high, doesn't it reason that you should be as productive as you can?

At the end of the day it all comes down to your ability to focus. So, how do you focus on demand? We've got a couple ideas.

## Take a Break

Yep, that's right. Countless studies have proven that taking frequent short breaks is essential for maximizing your productivity. In fact, people that take a five-minute break every hour to leave the office, take a short walk and get away from their desk entirely are much more productive than those that are seated behind a computer screen for hours on end. Try scheduling purposeful breaks throughout the day. You'll find that your ability to focus on a singular task and get things done increases immediately.

## **No More Multitasking**

It happens dozens of times per day. You're working on something and the new email alert shows up in the bottom right corner of your computer screen. You see it, click on it, and before you know it, you're embroiled in responding and have totally lost track of what you were working on before. When you finally return to the task at hand, that email is still on your mind and you have to backtrack to figure out where you left off. Talk about wasted time.

Try time blocking. If you purposefully set time aside for certain tasks each day and stick to it, you'll be shocked at how well you're able to maintain focus and get things done.

## **Music Anyone?**

Maybe it's not for everyone and we're certainly not talking about having the latest Katy Perry single on repeat. But if you find yourself struggling to maintain your focus, you might want to experiment with have some soothing classical or piano music playing in the background while you work. Studies have shown this to be an effective strategy to stay on task.

## **Get Rid of Clutter**

There's nothing worse than coming into the office in the morning and not being able to see your desk. Quality reports on top of company memos buried under those thank you notes you forgot to send yesterday. By the time you've cleaned up the mess, 30 minutes have gone by and you're still not sure where you left off.

If you make a point to stay organized and clean your desk off before you leave every day, you'll be able to get off to a fast start the following morning and maintain that momentum throughout the day.

## **Breathe**

Think about how your body reacts when you're stressed or under the gun. Do you tense up? Does your breath become shallow? Of course, that's the natural reaction when you're uncomfortable. Your mind is racing with 1,000 different

thoughts and your ability to focus becomes greatly diminished. Even though it seems counterintuitive, this is when you should actually slow things down and take some [conscious deep breaths](#). Doing so helps you stay in the present and allows your mind to more clearly process everything that's going on.

## The Power of a Nap

It's not likely that it will be possible every day, but if you can carve out 10-30 minutes for a power nap in the early afternoon, it can make all the difference between being worthless the rest of the day and feeling recharged. The body and mind have an amazing ability to bounce back quickly, they just need a little time.

## Exercise

We're not talking about doing an entire workout in the gym. But, if you've been sitting behind your desk all morning, your blood circulation slows and it's easy to become tired. If you start feeling lethargic or your mind starts to wander, take a couple minutes to do jumping jacks, go on a walk or any other kind of [quick physical activity](#). Before you know it, you'll feel refreshed and awake.

Ok, you don't have to go to the extreme of filming yourself in the office to conjure up some ways to boost your focus and see just how much time you're wasting throughout the day. Instead, be conscious of distractions like email, your phone and social media. There's nothing wrong with taking mental breaks to indulge these habits, you just don't want to let them get in the way of your productivity. If you implement some of the strategies above when you're feeling tired or distracted, you'll be amazed by just how much more you can get done between 9:00 and 5:00.

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# Methods to Get Your Team to Follow Your Lead



At some point in your career you've either managed or been part of a team where there was a noticeable disconnect between the person at the top and everyone else. Sure, objectives and responsibilities were explicit, but when it came to getting things done and maximizing productivity, it was a constant struggle. Any number of factors can cause a team to not function at its best, but employee engagement is almost always part of the problem. So, if you're struggling to get the results you want from your team or feel like you're struggling to get everyone on the same page, read on.

## It Starts with You

If you want to get the most out of everyone on your team, you need to show them that you're 100% invested. Sure, you've got your own set of responsibilities, but you have to demonstrate that you're not afraid to get your hands dirty too. Whether that means carving out time every week to help with the more menial activities or just checking in with folks on an individual basis, the people you manage need to see you as one of them.

## Never Lose Sight of the Bigger Picture

When work becomes repetitive and the members of your team focus are just getting through the day, you're headed for trouble. Before you know it, productivity begins to slide along with the quality of work being done. All of sudden, doing the bare minimum becomes arduous and it's all you can do to meet

deadlines and basic operating goals.

This is why it's important that everyone on your team feels like they are working for something bigger than themselves. When you're able to connect day-to-day tasks with a grander plan, your team members take pride in their work and become more productive as a result. Even though it might not happen overnight, there are plenty of ways to motivate your employees to get behind your mission. Bonuses, paid time off and team bonding activities are just a few.

## **Make Collaborative Decisions**

You have the final say when it comes to making big decisions. But if you want to get the most out of your team, their input needs to be considered before you make a final call. When people feel like they're empowered to share their thoughts and ideas, they automatically become more invested in the process. While your meetings with managers and higher-ups aren't going anywhere, regularly scheduling all hands-on deck meetings with your team fosters an environment of inclusion. And the best part is you'll often find that some of the best and brightest ideas come from the folks that are in the trenches on a daily basis.

## **Recognize Strengths and Delegate**

No one wants to work for a boss that feels like they have to do everything themselves in order to get things done right. That's why recognizing people's strengths and delegating responsibilities accordingly is so powerful. Do you have an entry-level employee whose attention to details is impeccable? Great, charge them with reviewing documents or procedures and follow up communication with those involved. Not only will you have more time to focus your attention in other areas, you'll make that team member feel valued as well.

## **Make Your Strategy Visual**

Everyone has different learning styles. Some people need to learn by doing while others just want a set of directions. There's no underestimating the power of seeing something in action, however. That's why video has become so prevalent in the workplace. When people are able to see what success looks like with their own eyes, it becomes cemented in their minds. Seeing is believing and when

you're able to make your words come to life, your ability to lead and influence grows exponentially.

In order for your team to reach its full potential, it's paramount that they follow your lead. If you're the type of leader that spends all day in his office shouting orders and circulating company memos, you don't stand on a chance. On the flip side, if you make a conscious effort to lead by example, give people the freedom to utilize their strengths and involve them in the decision-making process, your team can become an unstoppable force capable of achieving the kinds of results you've only dreamed of.

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## Why Body Language Matters for Leaders



As a leader you're no stranger to making crucial decisions, inspiring others, giving tough love and talking in front of individuals and big groups. Think about the last time you prepared for a presentation or spoke in front of the entire team of organization. Doing this is old hat, but you still went through your normal routine of practicing in front of the mirror and memorizing important talking points. You can do this in your sleep, but you're disciplined enough to not cut any corners. But when was the last time you stopped to think about your body language? The fact is, even if your words are the most compelling ever, they only go so far. When people listen to you speak, they aren't just listening to your words, they are subconsciously reacting to your body language. So, what exactly

does that mean?

## **First Impressions Count**

When you first meet someone, they will immediately make a judgement about you as a person. Sure, you shouldn't judge a book by its cover but unfortunately, it's human nature. Whether someone sees you as warm and trustworthy or standoffish and questionable, every interaction from that point forward will be judged through that initial filter.

In order to make that initial interaction a positive one with everyone you meet, there are some important things keep in mind.

### **Eye Contact**

When you meet someone the last thing you should be doing is checking email on your smartphone. If your attention isn't wholly focused on the individual, you'll immediately send signals that you don't have time for them or they're unimportant. Instead, as you approach a stranger, make eye contact. Right away this conveys that you're open and friendly.

### **Smile**

It's no secret that happiest people are the ones that smile the most. There's nothing that exudes warmth and openness like a genuine smile. When you smile, you put others at ease and allow them to let down their guard.

### **Lean In**

Have you ever heard of Brene Brown talk about leaning in? She's talking about vulnerability. And there's a reason she chose the phrase leaning in. When you lean into someone upon meeting them, you show them that your guard isn't up and you're vulnerable, just like they are. So, when you go in for that initial handshake, meet the person you're greeting halfway.

### **Handshake**

Speaking of shaking hands... How you shake someone's hand tells them a lot about you. If your handshake feels like someone grabbing a dead fish, you portray



disinterest and lack of confidence which are huge turnoffs. On the other hand, if your handshake firm and solid, it lets the other person know that you are genuinely excited to meet them.

## Talking with Your Hands

Think about the most memorable speeches you've ever heard. Whether it was at a company event with a large group of people or just a meaningful conversation with a friend or colleague, think about what the speaker did with their hands. Chances are they weren't resting in their pockets or glued to the side of a podium. In order to add meaning to their words, great speakers use their hands to express the message they're trying to get across. So, next time you're talking with someone you want to make an impression on, don't be afraid to use your hands. This isn't something that's mechanical or that you should think too much about. Just let it happen naturally and your listener is sure to see you in a favorable light.

## The Importance of Face-to-Face

Even though the majority of modern communication occurs over text messages, emails or video, there is no substitute for face-to-face. Sure, our ability to share information quickly and easily has made our lives easier, but the fact remains that it takes talking to someone in person to develop a real connection and build rapport. This kind of communication allows you to both send and receive so much more information than what is being said. Things like tone of voice, open body language, hand gestures, pacing and eye contact can shape someone's opinion of you even more than the words you say.

As a leader, it's your job to communicate with people. You wouldn't be in the position you are if you didn't know what to say. But, what is often forgotten is that words only tell half the story. People read body language more than they listen to words. With that in mind, if you can become a master of using positive body language when communicating with others, your potential to lead and inspire is unlimited.

As a recruiter for the [Life Sciences industries in the Bay Area](#), I would with business leaders to improve internal company processes through hiring the right employees. If you are looking for a new employee in the [pharmaceutical, medical](#)

device, or biotech industries in the Bay Area, contact me, Jeff King.

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# Steps to Setting Clear Expectations at the Office



If you're a part of an organization of any size, you know the importance of setting and maintaining expectations. Whether expectations are placed on you or ones you set for the people on your team, they need to be made clear and are understood by everyone involved. Whenever ambiguity is present, you run the risk of poor communication, people cutting corners and diminished productivity. So, just how should you go about setting expectations? Try some of the following steps.

## It Starts With You

People expect you to lead by example. If they see you taking shortcuts or giving anything less than your best effort, you can't expect them to give everything they've got. This is why setting expectations for yourself is a crucial first step. It's a good idea to write them down on paper and post them somewhere you can see them on a regular basis. Having clear expectations in your head is one thing. Putting them on paper is much more effective, however. Not only do you have a visual reminder, you allow others to see the standard you've set for yourself as well.

# Where in Your Organization Do Expectations Need to Be Made Clearer?

Before you go off reinventing the wheel, put in the effort to examine every aspect of your organization to see where improvements can be made. Is there a breakdown in communication between production and quality assurance? Are there issues with people showing up late? How can the regulatory department meet deadlines more consistently? By identifying gaps, you can hone in on where expectations need to be adjusted or made clearer.

## Communicate

Once you've identified where expectations need to be made clear, the next step is to [communicate](#) them to everyone involved. Whether you're addressing an individual or an entire group, meet everyone on their level. Instead of telling them they aren't doing what's expected, frame the conversation in a way that makes them feel empowered to raise the bar. Explaining why changes are being made in the context of how the entire company benefits is also a great strategy.

## Make Everyone Part of the Conversation

When you're setting new expectations, always remember that people have expectations of you as a leader too. This is why it's important to have a dialogue. By asking people what they need from you helps both parties become clear on what's expected. Are there supplies or tools that your group need to make their jobs easier? Are there antiquated processes that need to be updated? When you make everyone part of the conversation, they feel appreciated and the results will show in their work.

## Write Them Down

After you've communicated what's expected going forward, people will be enthused. After a while though, the hype fades and it's easy for people to forget or just go back to the old way of doing things. If you write down what's expected and post it somewhere visible, you provide clarity and a constant reminder for everyone.

# Agreement

After you've had a mutual conversation and identified what everyone expects from each other, all parties have to buy in. That's why it's important for everyone to read, understand and come to agreement on what's been written. If you have any dissenters, the chances of your expectations being met decrease dramatically. If you're dealing with an individual that has disciplinary issues or isn't otherwise making the grade, you may want to have them sign a written contract that clearly states what's expected.

# Take Time to Re-evaluate

In the age of technology, workplaces of all types have to be constantly evolving to be successful. Just because the expectations you set and the systems you implemented last year were working, doesn't mean they still are. Take time to check in with your people on a regular basis. Is there a policy that no longer makes sense? Does the IT department have everything they need to keep your systems running their best? By doing this, you not only keep a pulse on what's going on with your organization, you show people that you care. This goes a long way in determining how effective you can be as a leader.

It's no secret that the most successful organizations have clear expectations for both leadership and employees. They open channels of communication, set boundaries and define responsibilities. But how you go about setting those expectations is what makes the difference. Instead of sending out a company-wide memo that most people won't even read or barking orders at your team, go through the steps listed above. Doing so provides you an in-depth look at where improvements need and makes everyone feel like part of the process.