



Your Best Days at Work

Think about your best days at work — days when you were very productive, committed to what you were doing and actively involved in your work.

What words would you use to describe your best days at work?

What is it that makes these days different for you?

How do you feel on these best days at work?

What if you had more opportunities for best days at work? What would that feel like? How productive would you be? What would it mean for your personal wellbeing? What effect would it have on others around you?

Don't Be Satisfied With Satisfaction Alone

There is a difference between engagement and satisfaction. While many organizations spend a lot of time and money measuring employees' overall satisfaction, it is not a great indicator of high performance. Gallup's research shows that although keeping employees happy or satisfied can help build a more positive workplace, measuring workers' satisfaction or happiness levels alone is insufficient in creating sustainable change, retaining top performers and positively affecting the bottom line. Employees need to be engaged for these actions to occur.

Satisfied or happy employees are not necessarily engaged employees. While satisfaction is important, engagement goes one step further. Engaged employees have well-defined roles in the organization, make strong contributions, are actively connected to their larger team and company, and are continuously progressing.

Satisfied

May or may not be productive

Put their time, but not necessarily their energy, into their work

Take a wait-and-see attitude toward their job

Engaged

Work with passion

Perform at consistently high levels

Drive innovation and move their organization forward

Types of Employees at Your Company

There are three types of employees in every workplace. Leaders often say that their organization's greatest asset is its employees, but this is only true when those employees are fully engaged in their jobs. Engaged employees differ from not engaged and actively disengaged employees because of the extra effort they bring to their roles every day. Engaged employees go the extra mile because of their strong emotional connection to their company. Reaching this special state goes beyond being simply satisfied at work to a state of strong psychological commitment.

Each of these three types of employees plays a role in setting the tone at your company and determining how successful your organization will be. As a manager, you strongly influence the number of employees who fall into each of these categories within your team.

ENGAGED

Engaged employees are highly involved in and enthusiastic about their work and workplace. They are psychological "owners," drive performance and innovation, and move the organization forward.

Engaged employees work with passion and feel a profound connection to their company. They want to know the desired expectations for their role so that they can meet and exceed them. Engaged employees are naturally curious about their company and their place in it. They perform at consistently high levels. They want to use their talents and strengths at work every day.

Only 23% of workers worldwide are engaged in their jobs.*



Can you imagine what your workforce would be like if that number were higher?

NOT ENGAGED

Not engaged employees are psychologically unattached to their work and company. Because their engagement needs are not being fully met, they're putting time — but not energy or passion — into their work.

Employees who are not engaged can be difficult to spot. They are not hostile or disruptive. These employees may be happy and satisfied with their job but work without passion, commitment or energy. Essentially, these employees are stuck in neutral. They show up to work and go through the motions. They don't feel a connection with their company, manager or coworkers and are not overly concerned about customers, productivity, profitability, waste, safety, or the connection to the mission or purpose of the team. These employees would leave to go work for another company if a better opportunity arose.

62% of workers worldwide are not engaged in their work.



These employees represent a great opportunity and a great risk.

* According to Gallup's State of the Global Workplace: 2024 Report

ACTIVELY DISENGAGED

Actively disengaged employees aren't just unhappy at work — they are resentful that their needs aren't being met and are acting out their unhappiness. Every day, these workers potentially undermine what their engaged coworkers accomplish.

Actively disengaged employees are consistently negative and seem to be against everything and everyone. What's worse, they insist on sharing this unhappiness with their colleagues. These actively disengaged employees monopolize a manager's time, account for more quality defects, contribute to theft, miss more days of work and quit at a higher rate than engaged employees. In short, these employees are generally miserable at work, making others around them — including you as a manager — miserable too.

15% of workers worldwide are actively disengaged in their work.



Do these percentages accurately represent your team?

Think about which type of employees you spend the most time working with and developing.

How much time do you invest with employees who are:

Engaged?

Not engaged?

Actively disengaged?

Although many managers might think that spending time improving actively disengaged employees is their best option, this is not true. The best managers spend the majority of their time with their most productive and talented employees because these employees have the greatest potential to exceed expectations.

The Needs of Employees

As a manager, you influence and inspire your team's engagement and actions. Managers create high engagement levels over time by continuously focusing on their employees' fluctuating workplace needs.

When researching the sources of engagement and disengagement in the workplace, Gallup found fundamental needs all employees share.

FOCUS ME

Employees need to know what is expected of them at work so that they can commit, deliver and focus on what matters most.

KNOW ME

The most powerful benefit a manager can provide employees is to place them in roles that allow them to apply the best of their natural selves — their talents — as well as their skills and knowledge every day.

FREE ME FROM UNNECESSARY STRESS

Getting people what they need to do their work is important to maximizing efficiency, demonstrating to employees that their work is valued and showing employees that the company is supporting them in what they are asked to do.

HELP ME SEE MY VALUE

Employees need to know that others acknowledge and value their best efforts.

CARE ABOUT ME

Employees need to know that they are more than just a number. Each person needs someone to take a personal interest in them.

HELP ME GROW

All employees need help navigating the course of their career. Employees want to know that there is someone looking out for and encouraging them to grow and develop, helping to push them beyond their current thinking.

HEAR ME

Employees want to feel valued. They want to know that their input is important and that they are making a significant contribution to and a difference in the environment in which they work.

HELP ME SEE MY IMPORTANCE

Employees want to believe in what their employers do. When employees feel that their job is important, they want to do more.

HELP ME FEEL PROUD

Employees need to know that their colleagues are committed to producing quality work. They need to have honest and open communication, an understanding of one another's work, and respect for one another's efforts and results.

HELP ME BUILD MUTUAL TRUST

People would rather build bridges than walls around themselves. Friendship is a gateway to building mutual trust, and it leads to collaboration and teamwork.

HELP ME REVIEW MY CONTRIBUTIONS

Employees need to understand how they are doing, how others perceive their work and where their work is heading.

CHALLENGE ME

The need to learn and grow is a natural human instinct. Where there is growth, there is innovation.

Managers often think about tactics, systems and processes. These things are important, but as a manager, you should equally consider emotional and relational matters in the workplace.

MEASURING ENGAGEMENT

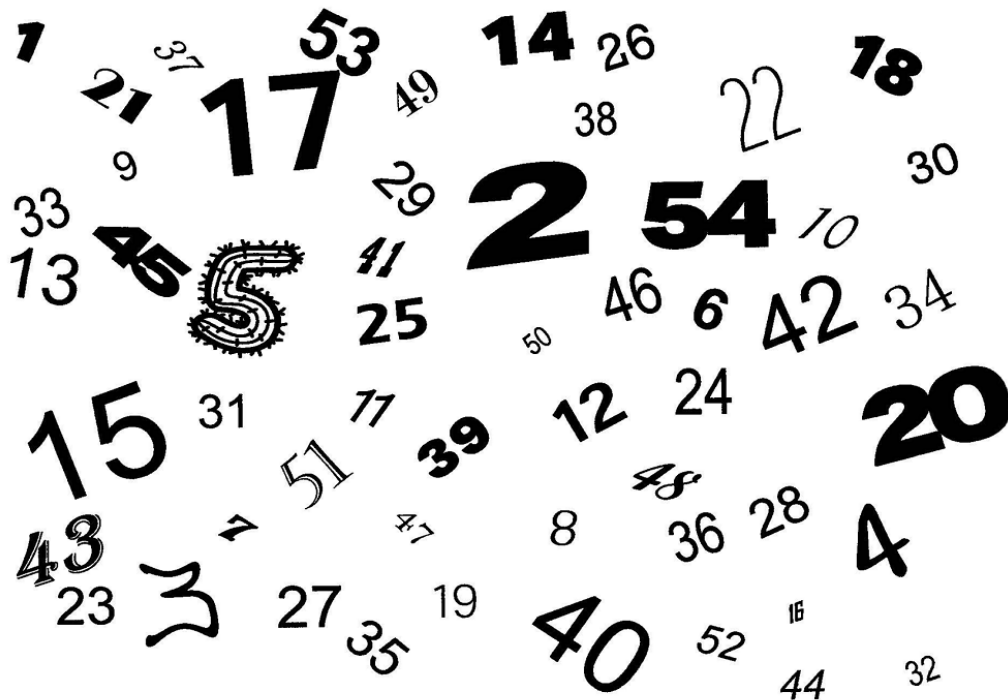
A Framework for Engagement

How can you measure your employees' involvement in, enthusiasm for and commitment to engagement? While challenging, the appropriate framework can help you better understand, categorize and approach difficult or challenging tasks.

A quick experiment will demonstrate how a framework can help you understand, categorize and approach difficult and unclear tasks.



*Below is a jumbled assortment of the numbers 1 through 54.
In 20 seconds, find and circle the numbers in chronological order.*



How many numbers did you find?

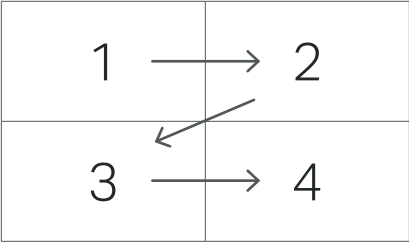


How Far Did You Get?

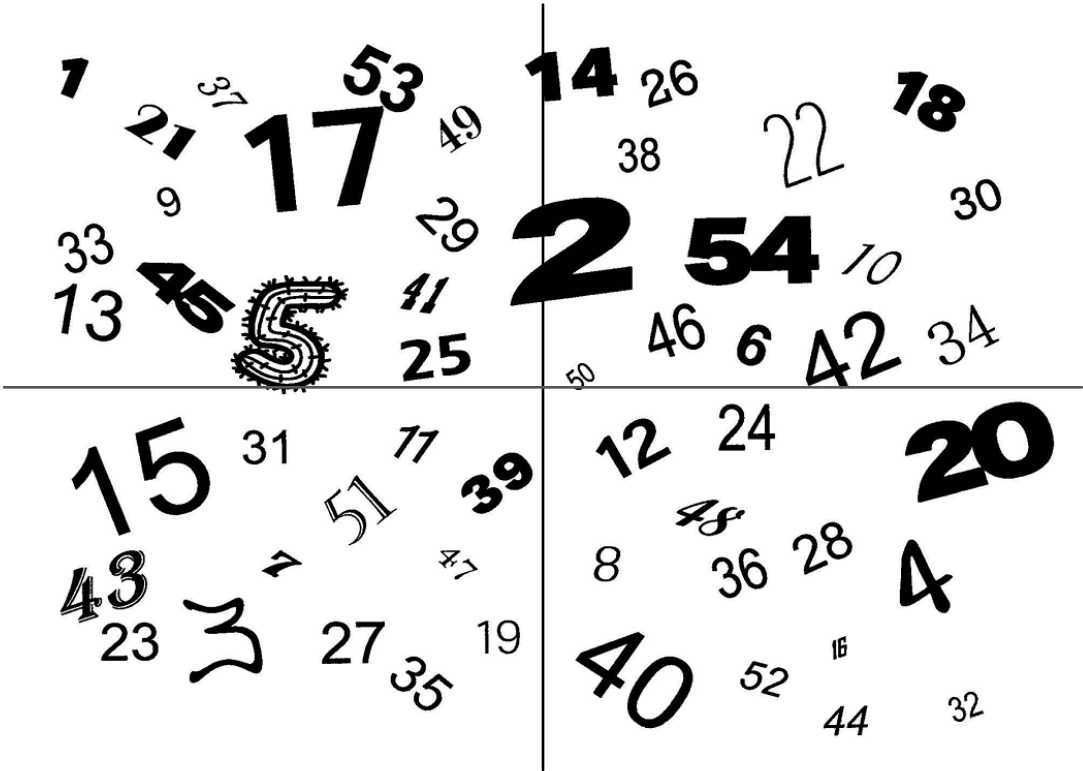
Try this activity again, but this time, use a framework.

Looking at the numbers using a framework, start by locating the number 1 in the top left-hand box. Then move to the top right-hand box to find 2, to the bottom left-hand box to find 3 and to the bottom right-hand box to find 4. When you finish, move back to the top left-hand box.

Follow this direction:



Using this framework, how many numbers can you find? You have 20 seconds again.



The appropriate framework makes it easier to understand, categorize and approach difficult and unclear tasks. In the largest study of its kind, Gallup set out to determine if such a framework could adequately measure a workplace's strengths. Ultimately, Gallup discovered a framework made up of the elements of work life that helped explain and predict employees' productive motivations on the job.

The Elements of Engagement

The best managers use the elements of engagement to create and sustain a great workplace.

Gallup has studied millions of managers from organizations worldwide. Through all of its research on what the greatest managers do to create the best workplaces, Gallup discovered that employees have specific needs that, when met, create and support a great workplace. We refer to these employee engagement needs as “elements” or “items.” Great managers incorporate these elements into their everyday actions and help create an environment for their team where these elements come to life.

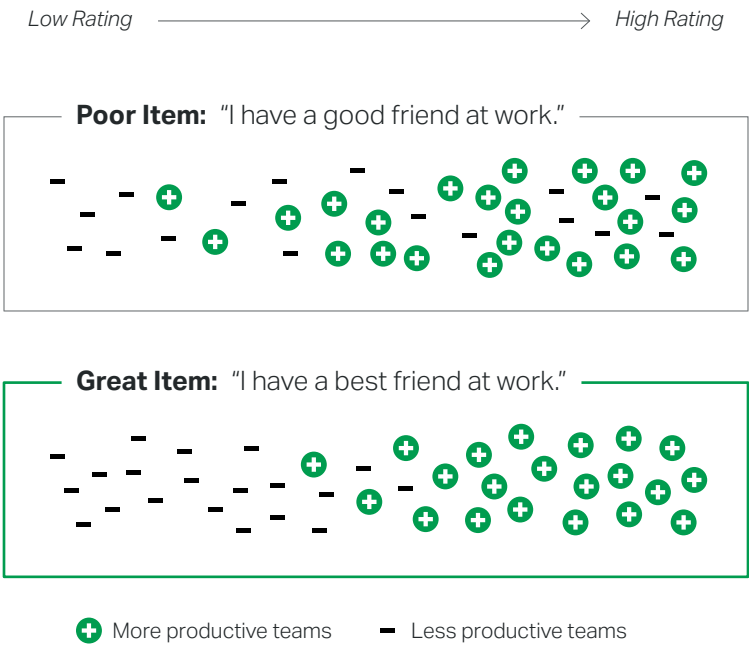
Great managers strive to have their team members report strong agreement on the following statements:

- Q00. How satisfied are you with your company as a place to work?
- Q01. I know what is expected of me at work.
- Q02. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.
- Q03. At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
- Q04. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.
- Q05. My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.
- Q06. There is someone at work who encourages my development.
- Q07. At work, my opinions seem to count.
- Q08. The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.
- Q09. My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.
- Q10. I have a best friend at work.
- Q11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.
- Q12. This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

Why These Specific Words?

Gallup examined employees’ productive motivations on the job to aid in building a measurement tool that would help managers. Over the past two decades and through more than 25 million employee interviews, Gallup learned that three criteria were needed to develop the employee engagement items:

- 1) The items needed to distinguish, or sort, high-performing teams from low-performing teams. Gallup calls this concept the sorting effect.
- 2) The items needed to link to specific, important business outcomes.
- 3) Responsibility for managing and improving performance related to these items had to reside with local-level managers.



The wording of the engagement items meets all three of the required criteria. There are clear reasons for excluding certain items and versions of items because they did not sort high-performing teams from low-performing ones. For instance:

Item	Included/Excluded	Reason
I have a good friend at work.	Excluded	Strongly agreeing with this item produced no correlation with business outcomes.
I have a best friend at work.	Included	✓ Individuals on high-performing teams are much more likely to strongly agree with this item. ✓ Strongly agreeing with this item correlates with important business outcomes. ✓ Managers can act on this item at the local level.

Where Do You Start?

Identifying the elements of employee engagement and translating them into growth, development and high performance requires considerable research. Gallup interviewed more than 1 million managers to find the best predictors of employee and team performance.

Ultimately, 12 elements of work life emerged as the core of the unwritten social contract between employee and employer. They are laid out in a hierarchical structure, beginning with Basic Needs and moving through Growth.

 GROWTH	Q12. This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow. Q11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.
 TEAMWORK	Q10. I have a best friend at work. Q09. My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work. Q08. The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important. Q07. At work, my opinions seem to count.
 INDIVIDUAL	Q06. There is someone at work who encourages my development. Q05. My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person. Q04. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work. Q03. At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
 BASIC NEEDS	Q02. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right. Q01. I know what is expected of me at work.
OVERALL SATISFACTION	Q00. How satisfied are you with your company as a place to work?

Behind each item lies a fundamental truth about human nature on the job. The links between each element and better performance not only draw a road map to excellent management, but they also reveal fascinating insights into how the human mind reacts in a work environment.

What the elements tell us is that employees need focus, they need to be free from stress by having the right materials to do their jobs, they want to be cared about as people, and they want to be valued, appreciated, heard, trusted and challenged.



Basic Needs

Starting at the base of the Gallup engagement hierarchy is Basic Needs. Employees need to have a clear understanding of what success in their role looks like so they can be successful. Groups with high scores on the first element are more productive, cost-effective, creative and adaptive.

Focus Me: Perhaps the most basic of employee needs in the workplace is knowing what success on the job looks like. Success is critical to performance. Employees need to know how one person's tasks or expectations fit with what everyone else is supposed to do. They need to know what is expected of them so that they can commit, deliver and focus on what matters most.

Q01. I know what is expected of me at work.

Free Me From Unnecessary Stress: Employees need the resources, such as materials, equipment and information, to reach the outcomes they are attempting to achieve. They need to know that someone understands their individual needs and is supporting them by proactively seeking and positioning the right resources accordingly.

Q02. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.

*On average, **about half** of workers are unclear about what they are supposed to do at work.*



Individual

Next, employees need to understand how to optimize their contributions. They need to develop trusting relationships and know that others value their best efforts. Manager support is especially important during this stage because managers typically define value.

Know Me: Team members want to maximize their contribution. They want jobs that are molded around the way they work most naturally and maximize the frequency of experiences in which they lose themselves in their work, focus on how they are internally motivated and find activities in which they are most naturally gifted.

Q03. At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.

Help Me See My Value: Employees need to know that their best efforts are acknowledged and valued. They prefer recognition that is authentic, meaningful and motivating. They want to belong to a team where recognizing others is always encouraged.

Q04. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.

Care About Me: Employees need to know that they are more than just a number. They need to know that someone is concerned about them as people first and as employees second. Each person needs someone to take a personal interest in them.

Q05. My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.

Help Me Grow: All employees need help navigating the course of their careers. Employees want to know someone looking out for and encouraging them to grow and develop, helping to push them beyond their current thinking. They want help finding roles or positions that fit their unique combination of skills, knowledge and talents.

Q06. There is someone at work who encourages my development.

*Only **four in 10** employees in Gallup's global employee engagement database strongly agree that they received recognition for doing good work in the last seven days.*

Teamwork

Employees need to feel that they are part of a team. They need to trust the people they work with and know that others trust and value them. The third step of Gallup's engagement hierarchy focuses on teamwork. As a manager, encourage opportunities for teamwork and a sense of belonging.

Hear Me: Employees want to feel valued. They want to know that their input is important and that they are making a significant contribution and a difference to the environment in which they work. This creates a greater sense of inclusion among workers and reinforces their sense of self-worth.

Q07. At work, my opinions seem to count.

Help Me See My Importance: Employees want to believe in what their employers do. Excellent performance occurs when people are deeply attached to a sense of purpose in their lives. When employees feel that their job is important, they want to do more.

Q08. The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.

Help Me Feel Proud: While adherence to standards cannot be forced, employees need to know that their colleagues are committed to producing quality work. They need to have honest and open communication, an understanding of one another's work, and respect for one another's efforts and results.

Q09. My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.

Help Me Build Mutual Trust: People would rather build bridges than walls around themselves. Friendship is a gateway to building mutual trust, and it leads to collaboration and teamwork. When employees have trusted relationships at work, their lives become richer, and they are more productive.

Q10. I have a best friend at work.

*Slightly more than **one-third** of employees in Gallup's global employee engagement database strongly agree that their opinions at work seem to count.*

Growth

At the top of the engagement hierarchy is the need for growth. Employees need to be challenged to learn something new and find better ways to do their jobs. Make developmental conversations with your employees about their progress and growth part of your normal routine.

Help Me Review My Contributions: Employees need to understand how they are doing, how others perceive their work and where their work is heading. When both the manager and the employee identify a task at which the employee truly excels and work together to create a development plan that supports the individual's full learning potential, it positions the employee to make their greatest contribution to the organization.

Q11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.

Challenge Me: The need to learn and grow is a natural human instinct. One way employees can learn and grow is to find more efficient ways to do their jobs. The best teams are never quite satisfied with the current way of doing things. They always strive to find better, more efficient ways to work. Where there is growth, there is innovation.

Q12. This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

About half of employees in Gallup's global employee engagement database strongly agree that someone at work has talked to them about their progress in the last six months.