

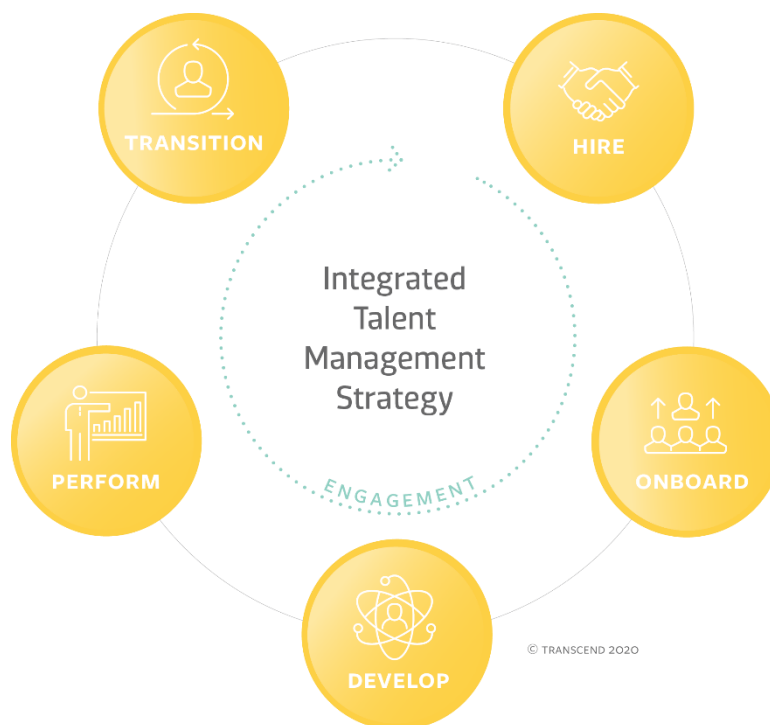
Employee Engagement Best Practices

Employee engagement is at the core of any effective Talent Management Strategy. In fact, companies with engaged employees [outperform their competition by 147%](#). While the term might often be solely associated with creating a fun office atmosphere (think ping-pong tables and wine-down Wednesdays), true employee engagement really centers around someone's feelings of connectedness to their work and company. Although fun can be an important part of feeling connected, there's more to consider.

We believe employee engagement should be the #1 driver of your Talent Management Strategy. Use this tool as a guide to help you understand what will fuel genuinely engaged and loyal employees at your company.

employee experience

Employee Experience is the combination of an organization's cultural, physical, and technological environments (Jacob Morgan, The Future of Work). To create "happiness" at work, leaders should intentionally design these three environments based on the unique need of their workforce. Employees will interact with each environment differently depending on where they are in the employee lifecycle (below).



AS YOU BEGIN TO SHAPE YOUR OWN EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE KEEP THESE FACTS IN MIND:

Happy employees are up to [20% more productive](#) at work.

Actively disengaged employees cost the U.S. [between \\$450 billion to \\$550 billion](#) per year.

Employee satisfaction at Google [rose by 37%](#) as a result of employee support initiatives.

Unhappy employees take [15 more sick days](#) each year than the average worker.

Employees who have a choice in when, where, and how they work have [higher levels of satisfaction, innovation, and job performance](#).

[Research shows](#) that the brain works better as a result of happiness.

Companies that excel at customer experience have [1.5 times more engaged](#) employees than companies with poor customer experience.

DESIGNING AN EXPERIENCE FOR EACH PHASE OF THE LIFECYCLE:

Your customer's experience will mirror your employee's experience. When employees are happy and engaged at work, they are more likely to treat customers better, refer friends and family, and contribute at their best. Here are some ideas of how to engage employees, focused on their experience, throughout the lifecycle.

Lifecycle Phase – Hire

- Make job descriptions clear and accurate to actual job responsibilities.
- Ensure technology systems run smoothly with a good balance between automation and personal touch.
- Conduct non-biased, comprehensive interviews that highlight your company culture and values.
- Ensure compensation is competitive and benefits are focused on employee wellbeing and flexibility.
- Send out surveys to candidates (whether hired or not) to ask them about their experience with you.

Lifecycle Phase – Onboarding

- Give the new hire an amazing welcome to the organization and team. Make sure to introduce them to their team members and important senior leaders. All their technology and essentials should be set up and ready for them to use.
- Strike a balance of allowing the new hire to contribute without overwhelming them.

- Have a comprehensive onboarding plan ready and co-create goals with the new hire throughout their onboarding process to ensure they are getting what they need to integrate quickly into the culture and perform within expectations.
- Send out pulse surveys at 30, 60, 90 days and then at 6 months for all new hires to find out what their onboarding experience is like and if it's hitting the design milestones you hoped it would.

Lifecycle Phase – Develop and Perform

- Provide opportunities for regular one-on-ones with leaders that are reciprocal in nature.
- Ensure performance management systems are adequately measuring the behaviors that drive performance within the organization and are aligned with company values.
- Provide career pathing and create adequate opportunities for development that are readily available for all levels of the organization.
- Send out regular pulse surveys to understand where you are hitting the mark and where you need to spend more effort and resources in this area.

Lifecycle Phase – Transition

- Provide opportunities for talent mobility within the organization and across teams.
- Ensure you are promoting cross-collaboration throughout the organization.
- Send out regular pulse surveys to understand where talent would like to grow.
- Conduct talent mapping activities (i.e., 9-box) annually to understand where top-performers and high-potentials are within the organization.

autonomy, mastery, purpose

[Daniel Pink](#) outlined three tenants of employee motivation: [autonomy, mastery, and purpose](#). These tenets should be implemented at the hiring onset through a dedicated onboarding plan. They take shape in meaningful opportunities for career and skill development, empowerment and decision-making, and by connecting everyone's role to something bigger than their daily tasks.



Autonomy is defined as the amount of power and decision-making authority someone has over the tasks they do, clients or customers they serve, and their role in general.



Mastery is how skilled someone is in their job role. Someone who has mastered their role can do all of the components of their job well (at least 85-90% competently) and can teach someone else how to do it too.



Purpose means the person not only understands their job role and responsibilities, but also understands how their contributions affect the bigger overall strategy.

This is often the component of engagement that is missed, especially with individuals who are contributing at lower levels within the organization.

SOLVING FOR EACH TENANT OF EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION

Autonomy

- Look at where decision-making power lives within the organization. Does it allow for all levels to be empowered to own their roles?
- Ensure leaders within the organization are delegating responsibilities appropriately and helping to grow their teams, rather than take on all the work themselves.
- Meet with team members regularly to learn their strengths and blind spots to provide opportunities for growth and empowerment.

Mastery

- Remember, most people don't come to work every day hoping to fail or make mistakes. Approaching a performance problem from the perspective that something is missing that can be gained – like awareness, clarity, or skills – can help you pinpoint appropriate interventions.
- Give the team member the time and resources to get the training they need to fill the gaps. This can happen through activities like shadowing a top performer, informal training with a team member or manager, or formal training.
- Provide the team member clear and concise expectations to avoid or correct any misunderstandings about what is most important to focus on.
- Give feedback to make the team member aware they aren't meeting expectations.
- Reassign the team member to a different role or task where they will be capitalizing on their strengths.

Purpose

- Provide full transparency into the organization and department's strategy.
- Have 1:1s with all of your team members to ensure they have a clear understanding of how their contribution connects to the bigger picture.
- Regularly connect the dots between what a team member has done within their role and the impact it has on the organization and its goals.

5-star model (by jay gailbraith)

The 5-Star Model is a great way to look at engagement through the lens of organizational design and structure.



COMPONENTS OF THE 5-STAR MODEL

- Strategy - determines direction.
- Structure - determines the location of decision-making power (specialization, shape, distribution of power, departmentalization).
- Processes – involving the flow of information and the means of responding to information technologies (vertical (\$ + Talent) vs. lateral (Workflow) processes).
- Rewards and reward systems – influence the motivation of people to perform and address organizational goals.
- People – made up of decisions, policies, and programs relating to people, which influence and frequently define the employees' mindsets and skills

WHY USE THE 5-STAR MODEL?

Organizational design has a direct correlation to employee behaviors, inevitably impacting performance and culture. As discussed in the section above, employees perform best when they feel motivated, and a company's culture can only thrive when the people in it feel a sense of connection and inclusion. If you find that performance has stagnated, or culture is lacking, the first place to look is at the design of the organization. Ask yourself – what is it about this design that doesn't support the behaviors that lead to the type of culture and performance we want to see?

