



SOLVING THE ENGAGEMENT PUZZLE



What drives engagement? Well it's complicated. Research shows a wide range of different factors are involved. These components fit together like a puzzle to create the whole picture.

Researchers differ on the number of factors that matter most in creating the engagement picture (it ranges from 10 to 20 usually).

To keep it simple, I've distilled it into 7 big puzzle pieces:

1. MY BOSS: Do I respect and trust my immediate manager?

This is perhaps the biggest driver of employee engagement. How a person feels about their immediate supervisor determines 70% to 80% of how engaged that person is. All the elements that follow are largely determined by the immediate leader.

For Improvement Tips See:

The entire *Next Level Leader Program*. It was designed to support and improve this aspect of employee engagement.

2. PURPOSE: Do I believe in the organization's WHY?

When people feel alignment with the vision and values of the organization it drives engagement. A compelling purpose beyond just making money can be very powerful. It is especially so when a person can see how their personal purpose connects with the organizational purpose. One part of a next level leader's job is to help frame and make that connection between an individual's purpose and the organization's purpose.

For Improvement Tips See:

[Module 1: Creating a Talent Magnet Team](#)

3. PERSONAL GROWTH: Am I appropriately challenged and learning?

Everyone has three jobs: To be fulfilled, to grow, and to perform. This element is all about fulfilling that second job to learn and grow as a person. It's important that people have just the right amount of challenge. Too much and they become overwhelmed and performance suffers. Too little and they become bored and engagement falls off.

For Improvement Tips See:

[Module 1, Video 2 and 3 explore the Three Jobs](#)

[Module 3: How to Have Performance Conversations](#)

4. FEEDBACK: Do I know where I stand?

Employees need direct feedback about how they are doing. Leaders who provide a feedback rich environment with honest, respectful and frequent coaching conversations drive higher levels of engagement.

For Tips See:

[Module 2: Have Constructive Conflict](#)

[Module 3: How to Have Performance Conversations](#)

5. RECOGNITION: Is my contribution noticed and appreciated?

Never underestimate just how inexpensive and impactful it is when you tell someone "Thank you" or "great job." People need a sense of recognition and appreciation for their work. This can be done informally, but I recommend you structure recognition in a formal way. That ensures it doesn't fall through the cracks

For Tips See:

6. MY PEERS: Do I have work friends?

Whether you have a friend at work is a powerful driver of engagement. People who feel left out or don't connect with the people around them are far less likely to be committed to the organization or stick around for long. While this isn't entirely up to the manager, a leader can do some simple things to facilitate friendships at work.

A few Tips:

1. Organizing informal social events can be very helpful
2. Encourage group projects for employees to work together
3. Team lunches are an easy way to support connection

7. RESOURCES: Do I have the support structures I need to do my job?

Knowing you have the resources to do your job makes a big impact on engagement. Here this could be the right structures, authorities, budgets, training, or talent. It may also include working environment, safety, or supplies.

For Tips See:

Module 4: Doubling Productivity & Impact

Other elements certainly impact engagement, for example collaboration between departments, how well senior leadership is trusted, and the feeling of happiness and satisfaction or fulfillment. However, most everything is driven by these seven puzzle pieces.

When you get the pieces to fit together, it forms a beautiful picture of high employee engagement. And then you become quite an unstoppable team.