Align People, Engage Technology:
Align Technology, Engage People

Table of Contents

Why Engagement?

The main drivers for establishing engagement strategies and initiatives are:

72%

Enhancing the organization's culture

66%

Improving overall organizational performance

56%

Encouraging teamwork/ collaboration

Source: Brandon Hall Group Employee Engagement Study (n=302)

Most people are already well-versed in the importance of engagement, but the key data point here is that improving organizational performance dropped to the second spot behind enhancing the organization's culture. This was not always the case; historically, engagement was seen as a means to an end; to make the workforce more efficient.

Of course, that's still important but more organizations see the need to engage employees because it has value across other aspects of the organization, from retention to well-being to internal movement.

Engagement's Black Hole

Employee Engagement 2018

Which of the following statements comes closest to describing how your employees view engagement at your organization?
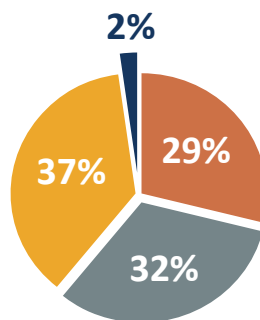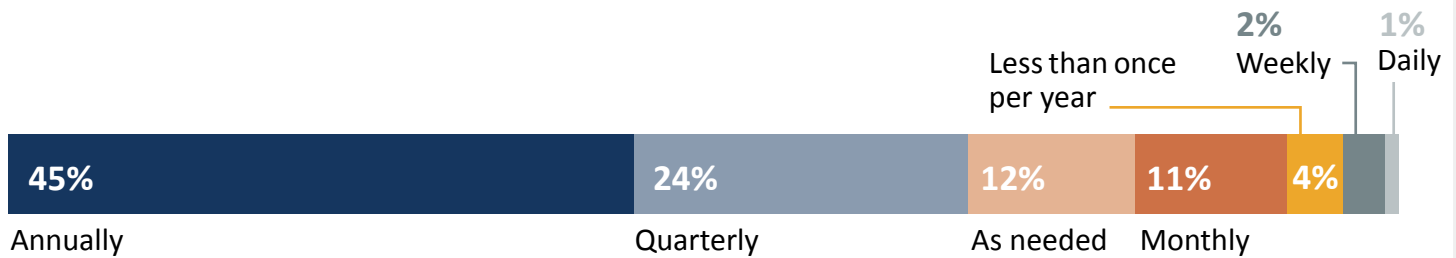

- Most employees never participate in engagement efforts
- Most employees do not consistently participate in engagement efforts
- Most employees consistently participate in engagement efforts but are not actively promotion the organizations
- Most employees consistently participate in engagement efforts and actively promotion in the organization

Source: Brandon Hall Group Employee Engagement Study (n=302)

The top right quadrant of the graphic shows that traditional engagement efforts, no matter how well constructed, are wasted because almost one-third of all employees do not get involved. But what if your payroll, PM or coaching technology WAS your engagement platform? Everyone gets paid; what if you make that a part of your engagement program and recapture one-third of the benefits of engagement? How about your performance-management process? Though PM traditionally has a negative effect on engagement, that is changing, as we shall see.

What is the frequency of your organization's performance discussions?

| 2% Weekly | 1% Daily |

Less than once per year

| 45% | 24% | 12% | 11% | 4% | | |
| Annually | Quarterly | As needed | Monthly | | | |

Source: Brandon Hall Group Employee Engagement Study (n=302)

As a majority of companies move to having more connection points with their employees than once-a-year reviews, the importance of real-time feedback dramatically stands out. Engagement moments are happening all the time in the continuous-conversation model. We have the technology and processes to support it, but what about the people?

Effects of Engagement

Organizations see an increase in employee engagement when they have the following HCM technology solutions in place:

56%
Coaching and mentoring

51%
Rewards and recognition

49%
Wellness/Well-being

Source: Brandon Hall Group Employee Engagement Study (n=302)

When you give people more opportunities to engage with the organization, they do it. What do these three processes and actions have in common? **Two things:**

- They were previously seen as siloed, standalone projects or separate departments in large organizations
- They are all very people-centric interactions

A bot can't reliably mentor or join a running club with you, or reward you for being yourself. However, a bot can answer questions about your benefits or payroll deductions. Look for those instances where a person is required — and make sure the responsible person is right for the job.
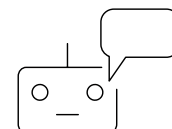
We asked respondents, *"Do you have a formal program in place to train your managers to become coaches and mentors to your employees?"*

Organizations with a formal program in place to train managers to become better coaches and mentors.

47%
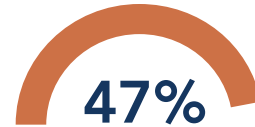
Source: Brandon Hall Group Performance Management Survey (n=365)

Less than half have a program in place to train managers. We know we need the right person in place for human interactions but we aren't training them to be that person. As we move away from old school PM, what can be done to train managers? The next question that must be asked is, will tools (technology and processes) be needed to support that?

Training and Communication Needs:

64%

of organizations rate their coaching and mentoring programs as not effective or somewhat effective.

82%

of organizations rate their managers as not effective or only somewhat effective in discussing specific growth opportunities with their employees.

1.5x

Organizations where performance management is aligned with business objectives are much more likely to rate PM as effective or highly effective.

Source: Brandon Hall Group Performance Management Survey (n=365)

The first two statistics in the graphic mean doom and gloom, showing that we fail to train our employees to become better coaches and talent developers. But the last stat is the most important because it shows how effective we are when we do it right; when we align our organizational goals and personal goals. That's where genuine engagement happens.

Real-time Rewards and Recognition from Managers

86%

of organizations give spot rewards or recognition to individuals as part of their PM process.

39%

of organizations give spot rewards or recognition to teams as part of their PM process.

Source: Brandon Hall Group Performance Management Survey (n=365)

The path to alignment runs through rewards and recognition. It's bigger than old-school, top-down "engagement" efforts or "rewards and recognition" programs. It's a key component of employee development. When you have regular conversations with your employees, you can give them spot rewards or in-the-moment recognition to align them with their objectives. Of course, the next step is doing the same for teams, and that's where we run into the need for a three-pronged approach again: processes, people AND technology.

How Does Technology Play a Part in PM?

77%
of organizations with alignment between PM and business objectives

+

14%
plan to add in the foreseeable future.

64%
of organizations overall

+

19%
plan to add in the foreseeable future.

Source: Brandon Hall Group Performance Management Survey (n=365)

This is where we connect the dots between people and technology. All these interactions need to be recorded somewhere. Highly-aligned organizations are the ones taking advantage of the technology, using it for teams, to support their PM processes and for peer-to-peer communication because, let's face it: even in small organizations, you can't record daily conversations with every employee and make use of that data.

Today's Market Environment

A growing economy creates

Competition with new market entrants and stronger legacy competitors

A struggle to attract and retain top talent

A need for better business execution

A demand to innovate and produce faster

Part of what drives these needs is a changing workforce and a changing market. We know there are more people working from home. We know unemployment is low. We know other organizations are looking at research just as you are. So how do you deal with these issues while maintaining a positive and engaging workplace culture?

Employees at work

39%
waste < 1 hour per day

29%
waste 1-2 hours per day

21%
waste 2-5 hours per day

8%
waste 6-10 hours per day

3%
waste 10+ hours per day

Why?

34%
of employees say they are not challenged

34%
say they work long hours

32%
say there's no incentive to work harder

30%
are unsatisfied with work

23%
are just plain bored

18%
say it's due to low wages

Source: Salary.com Survey

Nearly two-thirds of employees surf the internet each day doing things unrelated to work. Favorite sites include Facebook, LinkedIn, Yahoo, Google and Amazon. This isn't because they hate their jobs, per se. But many don't perceive the purpose behind what they are doing. Let's face it; it's hard to really connect to a company when you work from home, are given meaningless work or don't feel valued by your organization.

Key Takeaways

Seek human connections. Surveys and polls aren't engagement; engagement is asking how you can help people do what they want to do. If employees are aligned with their own needs and desires — not just with corporate goals — and with each other, then we are on the right path. Technology can help. We often talk about machines taking our jobs but when they are used correctly, they actually help us become more human, doing mundane tasks so we can do what we do best: help each other.

Alignment is a major factor in employee engagement, but only if the employee is interacting with your organization.

Find technology that encourages humanity and doesn't dehumanize it.

Employee engagement impacts much more than productivity.

Authors and Contributors

Cliff Stevenson (cliff.stevenson@brandonhall.com) wrote this eBook. He is the Principal Analyst for Workforce Management Practice and Talent Acquisition at Brandon Hall Group. His expertise includes data and analytics, performance management, recruitment, acquisition, retention and attrition. He also served as the HR leader for a Boston consulting firm.

Mike Cooke (mike.cooke@brandonhall.com) contributed to this eBook. He is CEO and Principal HCM Analyst at Brandon Hall Group. Mike has more than 20 years' experience in human capital management and the research, software and technology industries. Before running Brandon Hall Group, Mike was co-founder of AC Growth, a research and consulting firm, and VP and General Manager of Field Operations at Bersin & Associates, a global analyst and consulting services firm in all areas of HCM.

Rachel Cooke (rachel.cooke@brandonhall.com) is Brandon Hall Group's Chief Operating Officer and Principal HCM Analyst. She is responsible for business operations, including client and member advisory services, marketing design, annual awards programs, conferences and the company's project management functions. She also leads Advancing Women in the Workplace and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives, research and events. Rachel worked in the HCM research industry for 15 years and held several key management and executive positions within the Talent and Learning Research, and Performance Improvement industries.
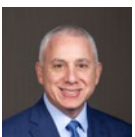
Michael Rochelle (michael.rochelle@brandonhall.com) contributed to this eBook. He is Chief Strategy Officer and Principal HCM Analyst at Brandon Hall Group. Michael leads a wide range of advisory support and strategic engagements for Fortune 1000 and small- to medium-sized organizations as well as leading and emerging solution providers across the HCM industry. Michael has more than 30 years' experience in HR, IT, sales, marketing, business development, and strategic and financial planning in Fortune 500 and venture-backed start-up organizations.

Richard Pachter (richard.pachter@brandonhall.com) edited this eBook. He is the Content Manager at Brandon Hall Group and is responsible for editing all types of content related to research. He has experience as a journalist, copywriter, editor, marketer, blogger and social media marketing manager. He also served as the business books columnist for the *Miami Herald* for more than a decade.

Emma Bui (emma.bui@brandonhall.com) is the Graphic Design Associate at Brandon Hall Group. She created the layout and graphics for this eBook.

About Brandon Hall Group

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 28 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

Membership
Individual and Enterprise Membership Options: Includes research assets, advisory support, a client success plan and more.

Professional Certifications
Self-paced certification programs. Virtual group sessions for companies. In-person conferences and summits.

SOME WAYS WE CAN HELP

Advisory Offerings
Custom Research Projects, including surveys, focus group interviews and Organization Needs Assessment for Transformation, Technology Selection and Strategy.

Excellence Awards
Two annual programs recognize the best organizations that have successfully deployed programs to achieve measurable results.

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

recognizes world-class HCM programs that transform their organization and achieve breakthrough results. This designation is the next step beyond the HCM Excellence Awards, which focus on a single program, and looks at the department as a whole.

SMARTCHOICE® PREFERRED PROVIDER PROGRAM

uniquely places HCM service and technology companies at the top of organizations' consideration list of vendors. It adds an unmatched level of credibility based on BHG's twenty-eight-plus years of experience in evaluating and selecting the best solution providers for leading organizations around the world.