

# ENGAGING YOUR WORKFORCE DURING THE GREAT RESIGNATION

Strengthening Employee Engagement  
in a Time of Turbulence and Change



# My Street Cred



- Co-owner of RCI with my business and life partner Linda.
- 35 years consulting with organizations of all types.
- Authored nine books on such topics as employee engagement, leading change, strategic planning, and fearless performance reviews.
- Teaches for the University of Wisconsin-Madison's School of Business and School of Engineering.
- Presented at TDCON2022 on the keys to employee retention.

# Our Agenda

- ① The Great Resignation – and what this tells us about why people quit/stay.
- ① What is employee engagement and how does it impact job ownership and responsibility?
- ① Factors that contribute to employee engagement.
- ① Strategies for strengthening employee engagement.
- ① Conducting engagement interviews.



20 million and counting

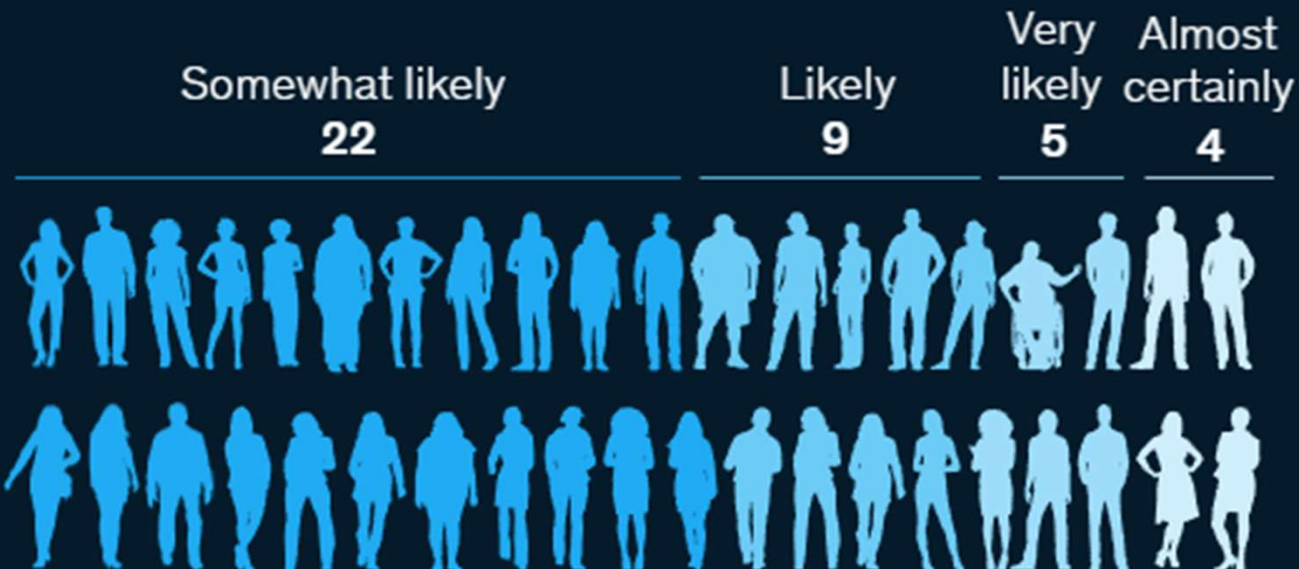


# And what about the future?

Likelihood that employees will leave their current job in next 3–6 months, % of respondents

40%

of employees stated that they are at least somewhat likely to leave their current job in the next 3–6 months

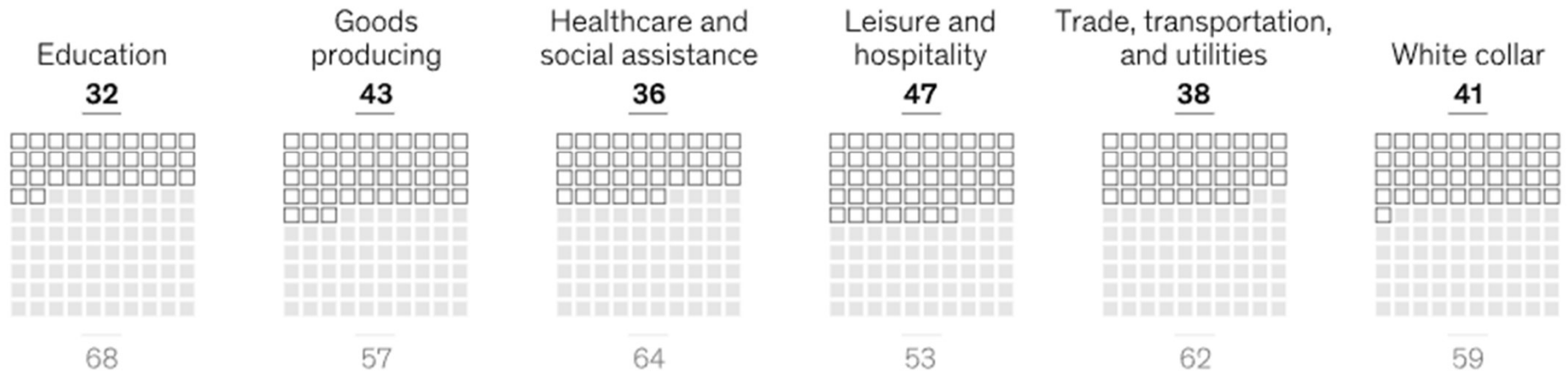


Note: McKinsey Global Survey, Aug 2021

# By Industry . . .

Share of respondents who are at least 'somewhat likely' to leave their current job in next 3–6 months, by industry, %

□ At least somewhat likely to leave    ■ Not at all likely



Note: Survey encompassed Australia, Canada, Singapore, United Kingdom, and United States (n = 4,924).

McKinsey  
& Company



**WHAT ARE THE DRIVERS  
OF THE GREAT  
RESIGNATION?**



# What the Research Says . . .

## Why Employees Leave

- Dissatisfaction with some aspects of their work or work environment:
  - (1) not feeling valued by the company
  - (2) not feeling valued by my manager
  - (3) not feeling a sense of belonging
  - (4) lack of work-life balance
  - (5) lack of potential for advancement
  - (6) not feeling connected to/trusted by my co-workers
  - (7) inadequate compensation.
- Better alternatives available.
- It's part of their plan.
- It **WASN'T** part of their plan.



# What's Important to Employees?

## What Employees Say . . .

1. **Feeling valued by the organization**
2. **Feeling valued by my manager**
3. **Feeling a sense of belonging**
4. **Work-life balance**
5. **Opportunity for advancement**
6. **Feeling connected to/trusted by my co-workers**
7. **Adequate/fair compensation**
8. **Personal health**
9. **A good/meaningful job**
10. **Feeling engaged at work**
11. **Reasonable workload**
12. **Care for family**

## What Employers Say . . .

1. **A good/meaningful job**
2. **Adequate/fair compensation**
3. **Personal health**
4. **Work-life balance**
5. **Care for family**
6. **Opportunity for advancement**
7. **Reasonable workload**
8. **A better opportunity elsewhere**
9. **Feeling engaged at work**
10. **Ability to work remotely**
11. **Feeling valued by the organization**
18. **Feeling valued by my manager**

# WHAT IT IS AND WHY IT MATTERS

- What does it mean for someone to be “engaged” in their work?
- How is engagement different from satisfaction?
- What are the consequences of:
  - fully engaged employees?
  - fully *dis*engaged employees?



# WHAT IS ENGAGEMENT?

Employee engagement exists when an employee approaches the work before them with enthusiasm, energy, focus, and commitment such that they are fully present – bringing the entirety of their talent and potential to their work effort.

# EXPERIENCING “FLOW!”

*“ . . . the holistic sensation that people feel when they act with total involvement.”*

- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*

When people are in “flow,” they shift into a mode of experience where they become fully absorbed in the activity.

Being in flow is characterized by:

- Narrowing the focus of awareness
- A filtering of irrelevant perceptions and thoughts
- Losing oneself in the task
- A responsiveness to clear goals
- Unambiguous feedback from the task and the environment
- A sense of control over the environment

# HOW ENGAGED ARE WE?

- **30% Fully Engaged** ←

Nearly everyone starts here in their career/job . . . And every day they decide to stay engaged or to drift into a lower engagement level.

- **52% Disengaged** ←

An opportunity to build engagement or return someone to full engagement

- **18% Actively  
*Dis*engaged** ←

May not be able to reach these people! Too much history; too much attitude; too much . . .

From: Gallup

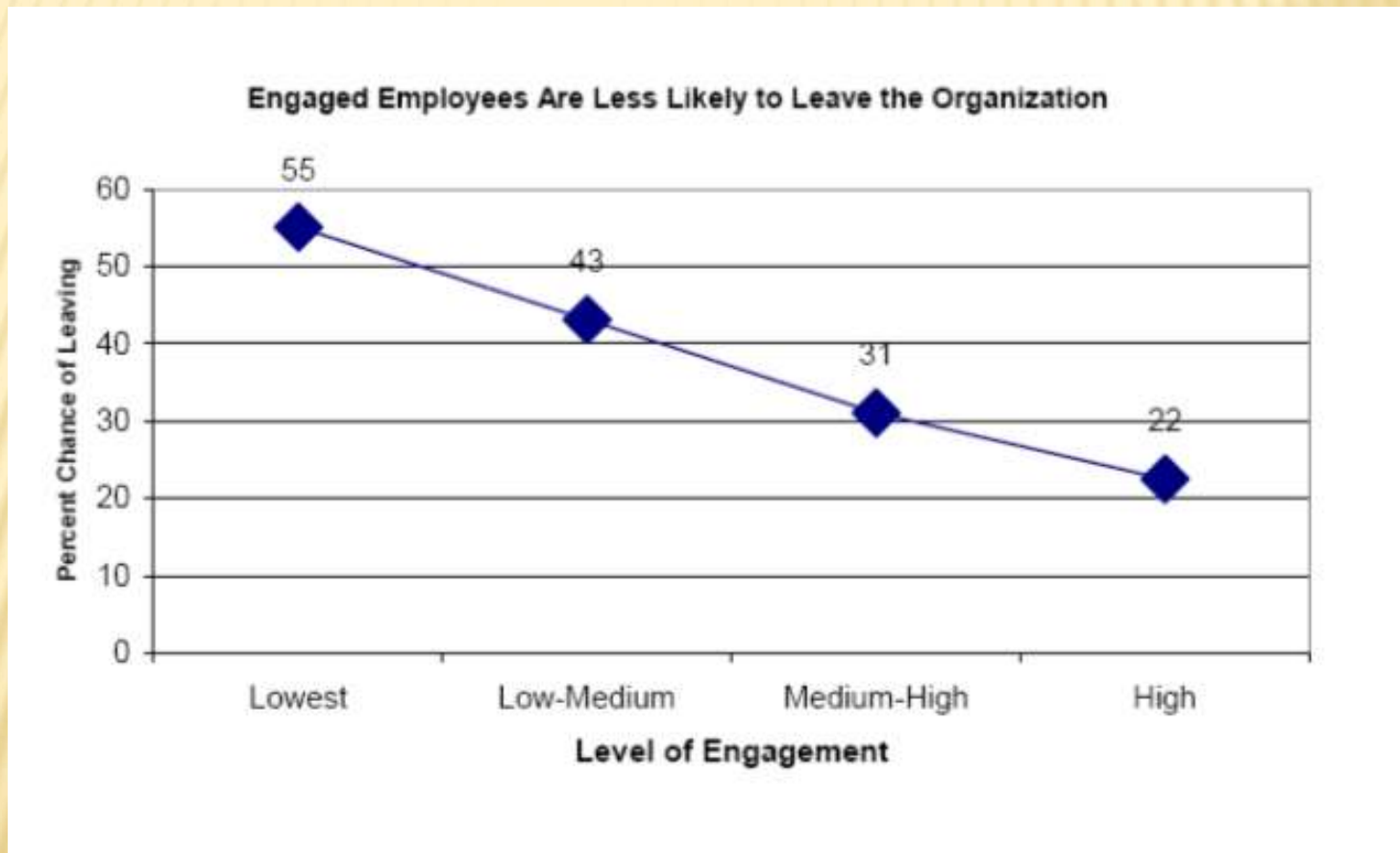


# WHY IT MATTERS . . .

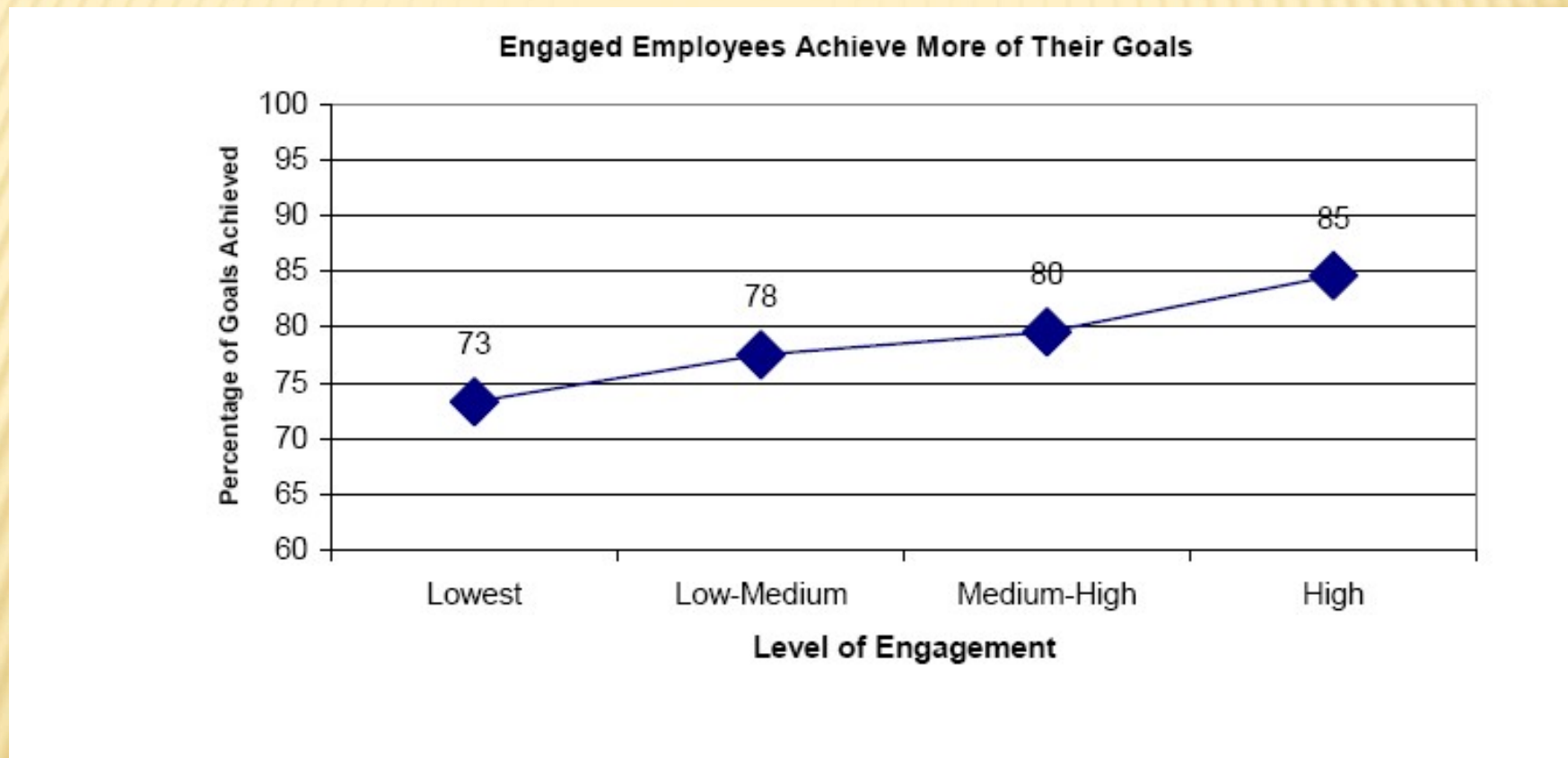
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- **Hewitt Associates Study** — improving engagement leads to improved financial performance.
- **Towers Perrin Study** — investing in engagement saw a 3.74% increase in profit vs. a 2% decline in companies that failed to invest.
- **DDI Study** — engaged employees were less likely to leave and were more productive – this leads to higher customer satisfaction, revenue, and profitability.

# ENGAGEMENT AND TURNOVER

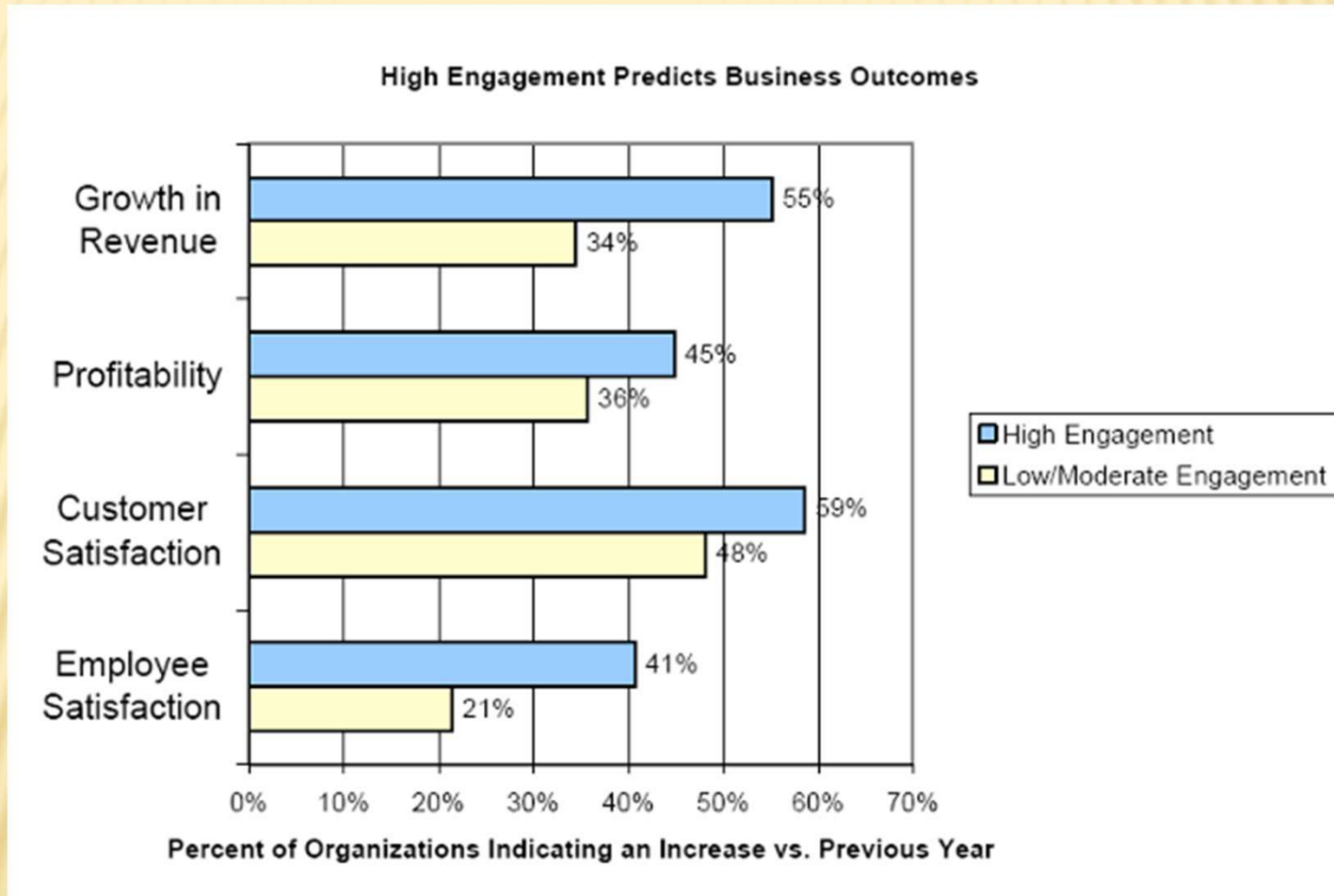


# ENGAGEMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY





# ENGAGEMENT AND BUSINESS OUTCOMES



Whatever you do will feel insignificant, but it is very important that you do it.

— Mahatma Gandhi



Quetico Lake Serenity – Ontario, Canada

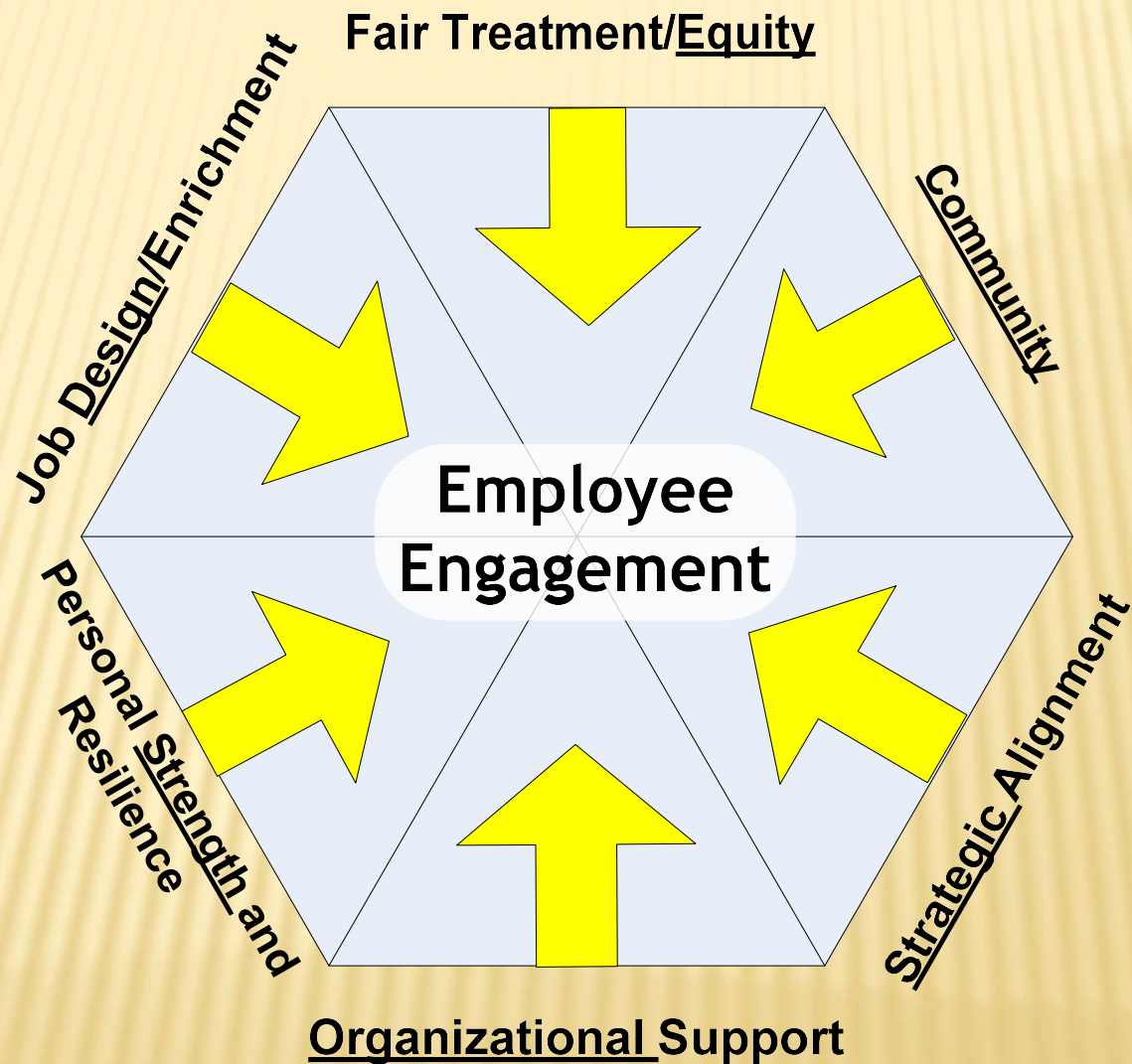
# ACTIONS TO STRENGTHEN ENGAGEMENT

Connect with 2-3 others and identify . . .

- What actions can **organizations** take (changing or eliminating policies, practices, systems, rules, etc.) to strengthen engagement?
- What actions can **individuals** take (changing or eliminating behaviors, attitudes, assumptions, etc.) to strengthen their engagement?



# ENGAGEMENT DIMENSIONS



# DEVELOPING ENGAGED WORKERS

Turn to your small group:

1. Select the dimension that feels the most critical to overall engagement.
2. Identify actions that leaders can take to facilitate and develop an engaged workforce . . .

You have about 3 minutes!



Kylemore Abbey  
Connemara, County Galway

Each morning when I open my eyes I say  
to myself: I, not events, have the power to  
make me happy or unhappy today..

— Groucho Marx

American Comedian

b. Oct 2, 1890 - Aug 19, 1977



# BEST PRACTICES FOR ENGAGEMENT

10. Free flow and exchange of information.
9. A work environment that is free of harassment and discrimination.
8. High levels of community, cooperation, and collaboration.
7. Active employee participation in decision-making.
6. At least annual effective performance reviews that are linked to strategic goals.

# BEST PRACTICES FOR ENGAGEMENT

5. Clear, consistent, and employee-centered HR policies and practices to which all leaders and managers are deeply committed.
4. Quality leadership/management selection and development. **[people quit managers, not jobs]**
3. Give employees the freedom to define/develop their jobs.
2. A well-developed *talent* management system.
1. A genuine leadership concern for and commitment to employee well-being.

# ACTION PLANNING . . .

- Demonstrate the **linkage** between engagement and customer satisfaction, productivity, and profitability.
- Actively involve leaders, managers, and frontline employees in **identifying actions that they can take** to enhance their engagement and the engagement of others.
- Conduct an employee engagement survey and develop a **baseline measure** of employee engagement.
- Develop an ***Employee Engagement Development Plan*** that is anchored by employee engagement metrics and which holds leaders and managers accountable for employee engagement progress.
- Conduct frequent engagement or “stay” interviews with employees – taking the pulse and surfacing issues.



# ENGAGEMENT INTERVIEWS

Conducting an engagement or “stay” interview is a powerful way to reduce turnover . . . by identifying issues **before** they result in a valued employee leaving.

Conduct stay interviews with . . .

- Star performers
- People with essential knowledge/experience
- Employees identified as having high potential
- Individuals whose departure might cause others to leave
- People identified in the succession plan
- **Everyone!**

# STAY INTERVIEW DIMENSIONS

- **General questions about the job/work itself**
- **Onboarding and orientation to the job**
- **The culture or work environment**
- **Opportunities and quality of employee development**
- **Professional growth or career opportunities**
- **Quality of direct supervision**
- **Quality of leadership and management**
- **Team member relationships**
- **Pay**
- **Benefits**
- **Recognition and rewards**
- **Company strengths**
- **Company improvement areas**
- **Changes that could be made for a better job, work environment, and company**
- **Long-term career expectations within the company**
- **Comparison to other employers**
- **What might cause the employee to ever consider leaving . . .**



## Example Stay/Engagement Interview Questions

1. Are you doing the "best work of your life?" If YES, describe this work. If NO, what circumstances, if they changed, would enable you to do so?
2. To what extent do you feel that your work makes a difference to the company, to customers, and to the world on this ten-point scale: 1 = not at all to 10 = significantly so? What could move your number closer to a 10?
3. To what extent is the company fully utilizing your skills, knowledge, and talent in your current role on this ten-point scale: 1 = not at all to 10 = significantly so? What could move your number closer to a 10? How else could we take advantage of what you have to offer us?
4. What frustrates you in your current job? What inhibits your productivity, quality, creativity, or overall performance?
5. If you could change three things about your current job, what would they be?
6. What factors about your current job bring out the best in you?
7. What would you like to see more of in the work environment to grow your level of engagement and performance?
8. Where would you like to be in this company five years from now? What needs to happen to enable you to achieve that goal?
9. What are the most challenging/exciting aspects of your current job situation? What could we do to further challenge you in a positive way?
10. Have you ever considered looking for a job with another company? If so, what were you looking for in that company that we don't have here to the same extent? What, in the end, caused you to stay with us?
11. Have you ever been recruited by another company to leave us? If so, what caused you to stay working for us?
12. To what extent do we live out our vision, mission, and values on this ten-point scale: 1 = not at all to 10 = significantly so? Please explain your answer. What could we do to move your number closer to a ten?
13. To what extent are you recognized, praised, or rewarded in a way that increased the level of your job commitment on this ten-point scale: 1 = not at all to 10 = significantly so? Describe a recent situation where this happened for you.
14. What other ways might we acknowledge, reward, or celebrate your contributions that you would find affirming?
15. Which of these following internal "drivers" to your motivation and engagement are most important to you? If all are important to you, which is most important? (a) *Autonomy* – being able to make decisions and take action on your own; (b) *Mastery* – feeling as though you are always learning and growing; (c) *Meaning/Purpose* – that what you do at this company is meaningful.
16. If something were to happen in your job or if you were presented with a job opportunity outside of the company – either of which might give you a reason to consider leaving us – what might that reason be?
17. Is there anything else that you could tell me that, if I knew this, would help me better understand what brings out your best performance and better understand how I can be helpful in supporting you?

# Engagement or Stay Interview Questions





Sunset Over  
Black Earth Creek

Life is ten percent what happens to you and  
ninety percent how you respond to it.

Lou Holtz  
American Football Coach  
b. 1937





Sometimes I lie awake at night, and I ask,  
“Where have I gone wrong?” Then a voice  
says to me . . .

“This is going to take more than one night!”

— Charles M. Schulz  
Charlie Brown in “Peanuts”

Bleeding Hearts  
Russell Gardens



# Thank you!

## Email me for a copy of this PowerPoint

Foggy Sunrise  
Eagle Harbor, Door County