

The Manger’s Keys Employee Engagement

Engaged employees are proactive, productive, and creative. The keys to releasing this inner zealotry are in the hands of direct supervisors. This table lists practical things any manager can do to open the door to the passion and focus within their people.

Conditions for Thriving	Setting the Conditions
<p>Control/ Choice People feel powerful, valued, responsible and capable when they have control. They take action and solve problems. When they don’t, They can grow passive, lethargic, and bitter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit standard operating procedures to the absolute minimum. • Train people well and allow them to use their judgment. • Define the purpose and outcomes of work; let people choose how to do it. • Let people pick their own assignments as much as is practical. • Provide time to work on personal projects.
<p>Challenge People thrive when challenged to do something hard, especially if they believe they have “what it takes.” They can become bored and disinterested with routine work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cast a personal vision for people; show them their potential. • Push people to take on more complex assignments. • Set high goals; “demand” excellence; give lots of feedback. • Create contests and “gamify” work. • Assign people to complete whole projects rather than subtasks. • Give people a variety of tasks to complete. Rotate roles and cross train.
<p>Learning People like to learn and stagnate when they aren’t learning. The best learning comes naturally by overcoming challenge, but it is also important to provide structured learning experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign tasks outside of the normal routine. • Conduct regular training sessions as part of the normal work routine. • Managers – maintain responsibility for training; don’t abdicate it to others. • Managers – know staff members’ learning needs; create learning plans for them. • Managers – teach your staff.
<p>Connection People were made to live connected, relational lives. They have a need to belong, feel needed, cared for and to work alongside other people in pursuit of common goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire managers who care about others and have high emotional intelligence. • Take time away from functional work tasks to build genuine relationships. • Provide real feedback frequently. It communicates that you are “in it” together. • Managers – work alongside staff as a partner in the work. • Encourage informal and formal mentoring. • Establish common goals and reward team accomplishments.
<p>Meaningfulness/Significance Perhaps more than anything else, people need to feel valued and significant. They also want to know that their work is meaningful and makes a significant difference.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate corporate mission and strategy. Show how it creates societal value. • Show how work contributes to the mission and how it helps customers. • Learn to speak the language of others’ Motivational Value System⁴ and Language of Appreciation⁵. • Ensure people are in roles that allow them to do what they value and do best. • Reward teams based on work quality and customer focused outcomes.
<p>Accomplishment People must know that their efforts will lead to meaningful results. Otherwise, they become apathetic and stop trying. But, success beget success.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set a clear direction and define expectations; don’t assume they are obvious. • Set goals, measure progress, and display results publically. • Measure quantity and quality of work; communicate achievements often. • Provide the time, tools, information, and personnel to fulfill their duties well. • Ensure that people “see” the results of their work. • Invite people to participate in meetings “above their grade.”