

# THE DYNAMICS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

*Dale Carnegie Training  
White Paper*



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## HOW ENGAGED ARE YOUR EMPLOYEES?

A fully engaged employee is actively involved in and enthusiastic about his or her work. He or she is willing to go the extra mile to ensure customer satisfaction and make the organization a success, spreading enthusiasm within his or her team and beyond. On the other hand the partially engaged employee does the minimum to get by, concentrates on the job at hand and adds little extra value. The disengaged employee demonstrates negativity at work and undermines the accomplishments of others, potentially creating a toxic atmosphere in the workplace. Engaged employees feel personally connected to an organization, are more productive, are less likely to seek alternative employment, and act as champions for their company. Today, engaged employees are more important than ever.

Dale Carnegie charged MSW Research with identifying and understanding the dynamics that govern employee engagement, ranging from tangible dimensions such as age, education, gender and income to the more intangible such as emotions. To assess their level of engagement, respondents were asked two questions:

- How likely are you to recommend your company to your friends as a place of employment?
- How likely are you to recommend your company to others for the purpose of doing business?

Nationwide, 1500 managers and employees of different ethnicities, working both full and part-time in large and small companies, government and education were surveyed. Less than one-third of those surveyed reported being "Fully Engaged" while just over a quarter were "Disengaged."

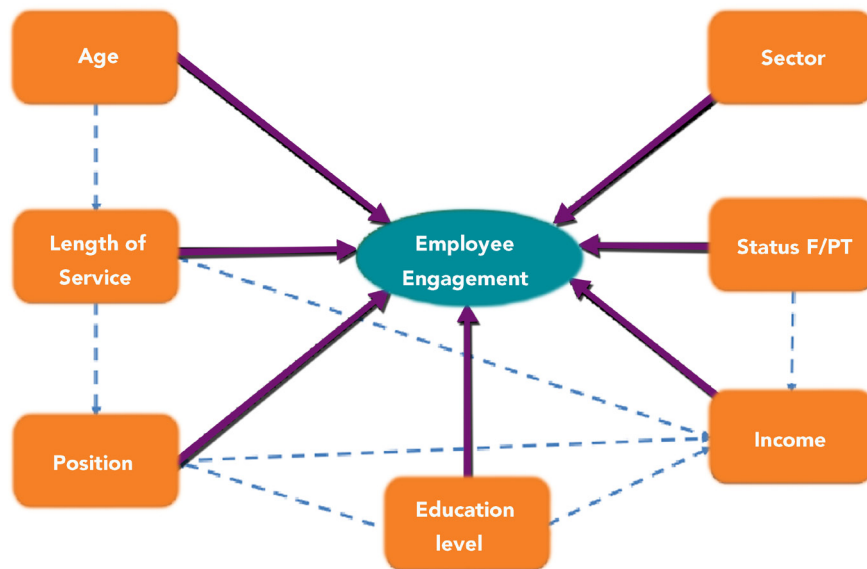
Disengaged employees are 2.5 times more likely than engaged employees to change jobs for as little as a 5% pay increase.



## KEY DEMOGRAPHICS AFFECTING ENGAGEMENT

How is it that one person will be invested in their work while another is less engaged? Picking the right person for the job is the obvious first step but for employees already working within an organization it is useful to examine the variables that can impact the level of engagement. The study reveals that gender, ethnicity and race do not affect employee engagement levels, but age, length of service and position within the organization, education level, income, working full or part-time and industry type all play a significant role.

Examining these critical variables in more detail we find that:



- Young employees and those aged fifty plus are more engaged than people in middle age. This may be attributed to the expectation of a new career or the exuberance of youth, and the achievement of career milestones in older workers. Those in the 40-49 age range are more likely to have external pressures due to family life; however, disengagement could also be due to these employees feeling they have reached a plateau in their careers. Steps need to be taken to ensure the employee doesn't sink from partial engagement to complete disengagement with all the negative impacts that can have on their work and that of their coworkers. Training opportunities and interventions specifically aimed at workers in their forties should be considered.

- The length of time an employee has worked for a particular organization affects engagement. Those who have been employed for at least three years are more engaged than the newly employed, particularly employees in the first year with an organization who may be less confident about their role or skills. However, the level of engagement peaks after three years of employment. Engagement is low among people with 20+ years of service, perhaps because of difficulty in maintaining motivation or a stalled career path.



- Those at a VP level or above are the most fully engaged, but 47% engagement among this group is relatively low given the importance of their role. The economic climate and pessimistic attitude toward “corporate America” may account for the relatively lower level of engagement among senior managers.
- Surprisingly, fewer of the most educated (post-graduate) are fully engaged compared to those who either have some college experience or even a high school degree. This partial disengagement could be attributed to the most educated having greater expectations that have yet to be met.
- Higher income correlates with higher engagement, but while there are significantly more people earning \$50K and above who are fully engaged than at lower income levels, income is not a driving factor. Unsurprisingly the most disengaged are those earning less than \$50K, but there are multiple factors that may influence this. For example, low-level incomes are usually associated with positions with high customer interaction, where respondents are more likely to be disengaged. There are no differences in engagement based on varying salary levels of the partially engaged.
- Part-time workers, who make up an increasing part of the national workforce, are much less engaged (26%) and more likely to be disengaged (29%) than full-time employees, who were 31% engaged and 24% disengaged.
- Client-facing employees, i.e. those in sales or customer service, are the people companies most need to engage. They tend to be the lowest paid, but working at their best level they will boost both customer satisfaction and revenue. Employee engagement is much lower in some sectors than others. Those who work in government, education, and manufacturing are among the most disengaged. Those who work in the health care are the most engaged.

More engaged employees feel they are in a high position or well compensated relative to their background, their skills or their age.



## EMOTIONAL DYNAMICS

Emotions, which we explore in greater depth in the white paper “Emotional Drivers of Employee Engagement,” have a major impact on an employee’s engagement level. Certain emotional responses are positive, others negative, but negative emotions have greater influence. The fully engaged employee is more enthusiastic, empowered, happy, confident and valued. The disengaged find their workplace upsetting and are irritated merely by having to show up for work.

## WORKPLACE DYNAMICS

Positive engagement is affected by overall job satisfaction, but disengagement is mainly impacted by dissatisfaction with senior management, although the disengaged express little satisfaction with any facet of their job. Interpersonal relations, a positive working atmosphere and a caring manager contribute to a climate of engagement.

## MOVING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT FORWARD

Employee Engagement is a function of the interaction between background and skills on one hand and position and compensation on the other. It leads to higher staff retention, lower salaries, greater customer satisfaction and stronger sales, but the majority of US workers are not fully engaged. Organizations need to manage employee engagement, ensuring that the engaged employees retain their enthusiasm and the disengaged and partially engaged employees move into that category. Dale Carnegie tailors programs to your specific company dynamics, identifying needs for individual roles, building on workers’ personal experiences and matching employees’ goals with the company’s vision to ensure enhanced levels of job satisfaction and a positive workplace environment. These insights fuel engagement, building champions for your organization to assure better service to clients and ultimately growth in your business.