

# Employee Engagement: What Really Makes the Difference

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MRA defines “engagement” as the extent to which employees are deeply involved in their work, are willing to give their discretionary effort, and are loyal to their employer. MRA’s Employee Opinion/Engagement Survey provides a measure of the percentage of employees in the workforce who are engaged, partially engaged, or disengaged in their job. Based on their responses to a specific set of survey questions, employees are judged to fit into one of these categories.

Several national studies indicate that about one-fourth of the U.S. workforce is engaged, just over half are partially engaged, and just under one-fourth are disengaged.

## These 10 survey statements have the highest correlations to engagement.

- ★ **My job is personally satisfying.** People are more likely to be engaged in their jobs when their jobs provide variety and make good use of their knowledge and skill.
- ★ **This organization’s values are consistent with my own.** People want to work for an organization they can be proud of, that is a good fit with their own beliefs, and represents what they consider to be important.
- ★ **This organization makes me feel my contribution is important.** Most of us want to know that we are more than just a “cog in the wheel.” We want to know our contribution is appreciated and considered important to the success of the organization.

- ★ **Management is fair and honest.** The recent wave of corporate scandals has negatively impacted the credibility of upper management. Employees want to be assured that their management can always be taken at its word.
- ★ **This organization is supportive of staff at work and outside of work during times of personal change.** Employees look for management to be understanding and flexible when issues outside work create workplace stress.
- ★ **Management effectively responds to employee needs.** Employees want to know that their needs and welfare are taken into account in management decisions.
- ★ **I am interested in the future of this organization.** When employees have an active interest in their company’s future, they are more willing to give extra effort to meet the needs of their department, company, and customers.
- ★ **This organization provides employees with opportunities to develop their skills.** Employees want to be able to grow in their job, taking on new challenges and learning new skills that will help them in their current and possibly future jobs.
- ★ **This organization implements practices that support work/life balance.** The issue of work/life balance has grown in importance. Employees want to work for companies that recognize and act on the need for work/life programs and services.
- ★ **Management is open to new ideas and ways of doing things.** When employees know that their ideas will be asked for and considered, they will feel more ownership of their work and will be more likely to take part in process improvement, lean, and other initiatives that will improve productivity, profitability, and customer service.

This article is a summary of the findings from MRA’s study of Employee Opinion/Engagement Surveys. For more detailed information or to learn more about MRA’s Employee Opinion/Engagement surveys, contact Kristin Reed, Survey Manager, at (262) 696-3488 or [kristinr@mranet.org](mailto:kristinr@mranet.org).