7 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES BACKED BY RESEARCH
Quantum Workplace provides an all-in-one employee engagement software, serving 8,700+ organizations to position managers to drive workplace culture, build effective teams, and increase engagement.

ALL THE TOOLS YOU NEED FOR ENGAGING EMPLOYEES IN ONE PLACE.

Learn More
ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Natalie Hackbarth
With a background in journalism and mass communications, Natalie partners with engagement experts and research analysts to create informative resources that you can leverage to improve employee engagement and company culture. She has an unhealthy obsession with Marvel Comics, Dr. Pepper, and her golden-retriever puppy, and she’s heavily responsible for the company’s crazy amount of coffee consumption.

Dan Harris, Ph.D.
Dan Harris is responsible for analyzing organizational data and articulating employees’ perceptions in ways that facilitate meaningful change. He has years of experience with all phases of research, ranging from data collection and logistics to advanced analysis and consulting.

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Welcome to the State of Employee Engagement — an analytical, comprehensive summary of employee engagement strategies. Designed to give executives and HR leaders insight into how organizations invest in employee engagement, this report aims to answer pressing questions like:

- What are the biggest hurdles to employee engagement?
- Which employee engagement tools are most utilized?
- What do organizations look for in engagement software?
- Who’s responsible for employee engagement strategies?
- And more.

About the Survey

We polled over 450 representatives on their organization’s view of engagement, who’s responsible for strategies, and what employee engagement tools they utilize for the best results. We’ve calculated the quantitative results, identified key findings and trends, and put the details into a polished report:  

*7 Employee Engagement Strategies Backed by Research.*
Increasing employee engagement and improving company culture are two of the top four people priorities for organizations in 2018, according to survey respondents (who could choose up to three options). Although the emphasis on employee engagement has remained relatively stable over the last few years, company culture has become more important. In 2016, improving company culture was ranked sixth, with only 21% of survey respondents considered it a priority.

**Top People Priorities 2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attracting Top Talent</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving Development and Training Opportunities</td>
<td>43.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving Company Culture</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing Employee Engagement</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing Productivity / Employee Motivation</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing Turnover</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing / Improving a Talent Management Strategy</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving Benefits / Pay / Perks Programs</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing / Improving an Employee Recognition or Appreciation Strategy</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving Employees’ Overall Health and Wellbeing</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to the study, nearly one-half of respondents surveyed believe their organizations have engagement levels that are above average or well above average in comparison to other organizations in their industry. Roughly 35% consider their engagement level to be average, and just over 15% said their organization was below average or well below average.

Employee Engagement: Both Action & Feeling

When asked what employee engagement meant at their organization, an overwhelming 80% of respondents said it was **both** an action (e.g., “engage with employees”) and a feeling (e.g., “I feel engaged”), not just one or the other.
MAKE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AN ONGOING INITIATIVE

Most organizations are transitioning their employee engagement approach from once-a-year projects to ongoing strategic initiatives. 61.4% of respondents said engagement was an ongoing strategic initiative for them this year, compared to 52% in 2015. Furthermore, almost 1/3 of survey respondents said their 2015 engagement strategy was a project they focused on for only a few months out of the year, compared to only 18% this year.

Our Employee Engagement Strategy is...

- 61.4% An Ongoing Strategic Initiative
- 18.0% A project we focus on for a few months a year
- 13.7% A survey that is administered with little to no follow-up
- 6.9% Ignored

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7 | State of Employee Engagement
ADDRESS OBSTACLES: TIME, MANAGEMENT, & BUY-IN

Increasing employee engagement is no easy task. When asked about their organization’s biggest hurdle to increasing engagement, respondents commonly referred to one of three themes: time, management, or buy-in. Check out their answers:

What hurdles do you believe are most common when trying to increase employee engagement?

“Executives/directors often dictate the need for engagement but do not commit the necessary time, energy and resources to the execution of the processes that ensure success. Managers are expected to “make their people be engaged” but are not given the resources or autonomy or sometimes even the people to accomplish the tasks. Employees are expected to perform mechanically with unfailing effort and ability, and to selflessly contribute without any recognition of employee needs as partners in the process.”

“Gaining long-term buy-in for the investment (time and $). Knowing what strategies work well. Also accepting the realities when survey results are showing an area that needs improvement- some leaders get defensive and dismiss the results.”

“Finding something that isn’t going to take too much time out of people’s normal work, so they don’t feel the company trying to engage with them is a chore or a burden. That involves finding the right incentives, activities, and messaging so everyone can feel comfortable and not forced into engagement.”

“Getting buy in from Management. Supervisors need to understand the importance of engagement in the work place.”

“Increased workloads and decreased resources. The “I don’t have time to think about whether or not my employees are engaged - I’ve care about them getting the word done,” attitude that prevails in my organization. The perception that it is not a manager’s/supervisor’s job to address engagement - that it’s an HR thing. Senior/executive management not holding directors, division heads accountable for employee engagement, and that accountability trickling down to front-line supervisors.”

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INVEST IN ONE-ON-ONES, NEW HIRE, & GOAL SETTING

According to survey respondents, exit surveys and interviews, one-on-one conversation tools, and annual or biannual engagement surveys are the most commonly used employee engagement tools.

What will rise in the ranks in 2018? Roughly 30% of survey respondents said one-on-one conversation tools, new hire and onboarding surveys, and goal setting and tracking software have become more important to their organization in the last six months.

Most Common Employee Engagement Tools

- Exit Surveys and/or Interviews: 77.9%
- 1-on-1 Conversation Tool: 70.2%
- Annual or Biannual Employee Engagement Survey: 68.2%
- Onboarding / New Hire Surveys and/or Interviews: 67.3%
- Goal Setting and Tracking Tool: 55.8%
- Any Topic Surveys / Polls: 54.7%
- Employee Recognition / Appreciation Software: 36.8%
- Feedback Software (e.g. 360s, Upward & Peer-to-Peer Feedback): 32.3%
- Pulse Surveys (with Engagement-Related Content): 21.8%

SaaS vs. Traditional Consulting: What’s Here to Stay?

One quarter of survey respondents said they prefer software over service when it comes to their employee engagement strategy. 41% said they prefer tools and services equally. Only 8% said they prefer a service-focused solution.
More and more organizations are realizing the benefits of an all-in-one employee engagement solution, a platform that houses every tool a team leader needs to drive culture, build effective teams, and increase engagement. Here’s what some respondents had to say:

What’s the biggest benefit of having all your employee engagement tools on one unified software?

“What’s the biggest benefit of having all your employee engagement tools on one unified software? "

“More management and employee engagement in the entire process. Having to go to multiple sites and log in, learn, and use is a deterrent in time strapped workloads. If you could pull this off in an effective way, it would be one more step on the path to engagement Nirvana!”

“For a company with more than 40 offices worldwide, having an integrated/unified platform would help us have a comprehensive look at our overall company feedback while diving into individual office cultures. This would be ideal for helping create a cohesive and consistent employee experience across all offices.”

“Having it come from the top down, but using an outside voice. Employees tend to buy in quicker and fully when there is an outside person/consultant holding us accountable.”

“Our strategy, although clearly still in its infancy, is about making engagement how we operate — not something extra. By having a single, unified platform for those tools that we consider part of the associate experience, engagement, performance, career conversations, etc., we bring that vision to life in a real way.”

“[...]Our agency emphatically believes that unified platforms or tools that create a “one-stop-shop” dynamic for our tasks and processes are highly valuable to the overall productivity and success of the organization! We strive to only utilize software and tools that enable a “single source of truth” environment!”

“TIRED OF MULTIPLE SYSTEMS? Check out Quantum Workplace’s all-in-one employee engagement software, where you can access all the employee engagement tools you need in one place.

Features Included: Surveys & Pulses | Goals | Recognition | Feedback | One-on-Ones | Ideas & Alerts | Analytics

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State of Employee Engagement

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According to the study, managers should play a large role when it comes to their organization’s employee engagement strategy. More than 63% of survey respondents believe managers are most responsible for sharing engagement-based results to teams, and nearly 60% said managers are most responsible for implementing employee engagement strategies.

Respondents believe HR is most responsible for monitoring the progress of engagement strategies, as well as researching and vetting employee engagement software. Finally, respondents believe executives are most responsible for communicating organization-wide engagement results and deciding which employee engagement software to implement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Managers / Supervisors</th>
<th>Executives / Directors</th>
<th>HR</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>63.3%</strong> Communicating engagement-based results to teams</td>
<td><strong>49.3%</strong> Communicating engagement-based results across the org</td>
<td><strong>56.6%</strong> Monitoring the progress and status of employee engagement strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>58.6%</strong> Implementing employee engagement strategies</td>
<td><strong>39.4%</strong> Deciding which employee engagement software to implement and utilize</td>
<td><strong>55.1%</strong> Researching and vetting employee engagement software</td>
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With Quantum Workplace you can:

- Make managers the central drivers of workplace culture
- Utilize every employee engagement tool on one, unified platform
- Conduct census, lifecycle, and pulse surveys
- Make employee engagement an ongoing initiative

The software you choose to support your organization’s employee engagement can make or break your success.

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