

Building Culture Through Strong Staff Engagement

Effective Leadership is Critical to Staff Engagement.¹ Engagement refers to our sense of commitment to our work and our mission. When we're engaged, we bring our full selves to our work—our creativity and innovation, potential and sense of purpose, hearts, and motivation. We experience deep connection to purpose and can feel like we're "in flow state" or "in the zone." When we are engaged, we feel passionate, energetic, and committed toward our work. As a result, we fully invest our best selves into the work we do.

While they are often referred to interchangeably, engagement and job satisfaction or happiness are quite different: satisfaction refers to how a job is working FOR us, meaning how satisfied we are with overall compensation, benefits, working conditions, etc., while engagement refers to how we are working WITH a job, meaning how connected we are to the work.

Core Requirements for Engagement



Psychological Safety

- Ethical stewardship of power
- Ability to be authentic and true to self at work
- Ability to perform work without sacrificing well-being
- Direct and timely feedback
- Mutual accountability across roles and authority



Meaningful Work

- Growth and development opportunities
- Connection between role and personal purpose
- Connection between role and mission
- Recognition for labor and achievements



Access and Capacity

- Supervisor empowers, and is available for feedback and support
- Individuals seen as human beings not human doings
- Pace of work may be challenging but it is realistic and manageable
- Time for connection and building relationship with colleagues

¹ According to Gallup's State of the American Workplace study, 70% of an employee's engagement is determined by their relationship to their supervisor. <https://hbr.org/2016/12/what-great-managers-do-daily>

Why prioritize engagement?

Staff who are engaged are **innovative, creative, motivated, purposeful**. When staff are engaged, they see issues as challenges to tackle rather than insurmountable problems and are far more likely to stay in a job.

Good supervision is foundational to engagement:

Engagement and supervision work hand in hand. When staff are given clear guidance, feedback, growth and support, leaders create the conditions for building a culture of engagement. Staff believe their contributions matter which in turn builds overall vitality and connection to the work. Strong engagement builds an organization that is able to deliver on its mission.