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Maintaining Employee Engagement during COVID-19

Our Perspective

May 2020

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It's no secret that we are all trying to adjust to the new normal...

Social distancing

Virtual everything

Working from home

Childcare

E-learning

Domestic & family responsibilities

...yet, many businesses are struggling in understanding how best to help employees stay engaged during these times

Employee productivity is a tale of two cities; stress is high

Productivity since the coronavirus outbreak

25.4%	42.2%	32.5%
report being **more** productive since the outbreak	report **neither more nore less** productive	report being **less** productive

Level of stress since the coronavirus outbreak
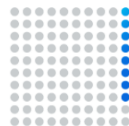
66.9%	24.8%	8.2%
report **higher** stress levels since the outbreak	report **somewhat equal** stress levels	report **lower** stress levels since the outbreak

Source: Qualtrics

Top reasons workers are feeling stressed:

- Fear of contracting COVID-19

- Financial pressure

- Being stuck at home

- Loneliness/social isolation

- Fears about job security

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Not surprisingly, engagement fundamentals still hold true

Employees who strongly agree that their leader makes them feel enthusiastic about the future are 69 times more likely to be engaged in their work.

Gallup, 2020

Only

55%

of full-time U.S. employees strongly agree that they feel well-prepared to do their job right now

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There is a way forward… COVID presents the opportunity for employers to show more empathy

Work/Life Flexibility

- Clear roles and expectations
- Focus on holistic well-bein
- Flexible work culture
- Scheduled downtime for personal growth/ innovation
- Relaxed policies on PTO/FWAs

Trust and Transparency

- Leadership transparency and honesty
- Leadership modelling of culture/values
- Frequent leadership touchpoints (formal and informal)
- Empowered teams; focus on autonomy

Sense of Purpose

- Renewed clarity of mission and purpose
- Understanding of personal contributions to firm goals
- Focus on social impact and "giving back"
- Uninterrupted culture of recognition

Sense of Community

- Investment in collaboration tools and platforms
- Manufacturing virtual "water cooler" moments
- Regular employee sensing/feedback
- Focus on face-to-face or voice-to-voice communication

Personal Growth

- Focus on digital enablement training
- "Doubling down" on coaching and mentoring
- Enabling self-directed, flexible digital learning
- Leadership development focusing on empathy, resilience, safety

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Leveraging authentic engagement can also lead to business efficiencies

01 Rejuvenate Collaboration

Find new and energizing ways to collaborate. **Explore existing and new platforms, tools or processes** and identify how they can be used to their **full potential**.

02 Work Smarter, Not Harder

Re-evaluate performance against plan and identify levers to **improve efficiency and productivity.** Emphasize activities **that drive the most business value** and **eliminate/reduce those that do not.**

03 Discover New Areas for Growth

By working virtually, **new areas of capacity** will emerge– refocus resources to your advantage. Identify new assets and initiatives to drive cost-effective growth in the short-term and **strategic growth investments** for the long-term.

04 Reevaluate Your Customers' Potential

It's tempting to view every customer as precious in a down economy – but go deep on your customer data and **identify the segments that drive the most value**. **Redeploy your workforce** to attract, engage, and retain these most valuable customers and **ensure your digital CX shines.**

05 Remove Communication Roadblocks

Agility and collaboration only come as a result of **strong communication** and a **deep understanding of expectations and roles**. Ensure your team knows how they can contribute to business goals and provide **transparency and autonomy** as they strive to meet those goals.

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Accepting the 'new' in 'new normal'

1   Be prepared for employees to seek additional flexibility – **do your best to accommodate them**

2   **Be creative** with how you deliver goods & services **– and think digital**

3   Communicate with your employees and customers **frequently** and **transparently**

4.   **"Care for the caretaker":** enable and empower front-line managers to respond to employees' needs and concerns

5.   Coach remote workers on **balance** and embracing "**virtual commute time**"

6.   Get ready for **fits and starts** – returning to work may not be a linear process

7.   Embrace **a people first mindset**

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