



MOTIVATING YOUR TEAM:

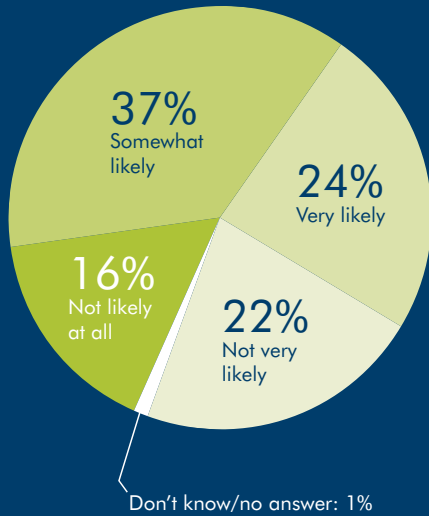
25

Ways to  
Increase  
Employee  
Engagement

 **OfficeTeam**<sup>®</sup>  
A Robert Half Company

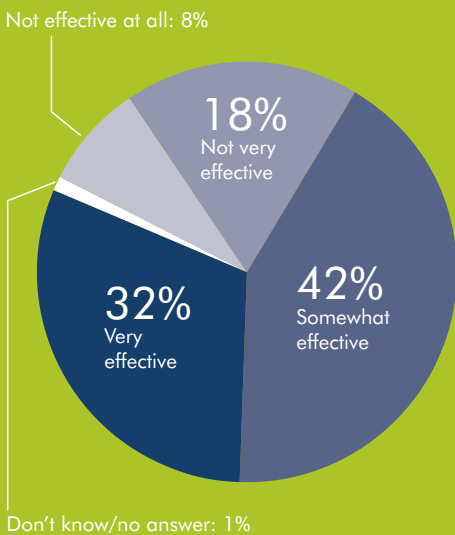


How likely is it that you would leave your current position if you did not feel engaged?



Source: OfficeTeam survey of 869 workers in North America

In your opinion, how effective is your company in keeping workers motivated?



Source: OfficeTeam survey of 869 workers in North America

Responses do not total 100 due to rounding

# Why Employee Engagement Matters



**Are your workers passionate about their jobs?** Do they come to the office every day eager and enthusiastic to dig in and contribute to the company's goals? If not, you may be facing an employee engagement gap, with workers who don't feel motivated or connected to their roles.

This can be a serious issue. A disengaged staff can have a significant negative effect on productivity, customer service levels and retention. More than one in four professionals we surveyed said their company is not effective in keeping workers motivated. In addition, 61 percent indicated it's likely they would leave their current position if they did not feel engaged.

The good news: There are plenty of ways to make your team feel more inspired by their work, and many of these tactics can easily be incorporated into your day-to-day operations. Read on for 25 ideas that can help you enhance employee engagement.

# 1 Keep Them Out of the Dark

If you fail to share crucial company information, either intentionally or unintentionally, employees will come to their own conclusions. Whenever feasible, give your staff updates on the organization's financial performance and long- and short-term goals, and explain what this information means for them and their jobs. Keeping your team in the loop will help them feel connected to the company.

# 2 Clearly Define Your Expectations

When employees don't understand what they're supposed to be doing on a certain project, it's hard for them to get excited about it. Every time you give your staff an assignment, spell out as many details as you can and verify that your instructions and expectations are clear. Also explain how the project fits into the company's larger goals. Encourage them to ask questions if they need additional information.

# 3 Don't Sugarcoat Unpleasant Assignments

Sometimes employees will be required to take on projects that aren't exciting or glamorous. When handing out these assignments, be upfront about the scope of the task. The last thing you want to do is throw workers a curveball or appear untruthful.



# 4

## Be Consistent

Yes, you need to treat each employee as an individual and tailor your approach to his or her needs. But don't reprimand one office assistant for taking too long to process the travel expense forms while allowing another to go days over the deadline on a similar project. No one likes to work for a manager who appears to play favorites.



# 5

## Set a Good Example

The adage "Do as I say, not as I do" doesn't work well in business.

You should exemplify the standards you hold your employees to, especially when it comes to punctuality, appearance, courtesy and willingness to pitch in when needed. This also means not concealing a mistake when you make one. You'll only encourage staff to hide their own errors.

# 6

## Ask for Input

Actively seek feedback from team members. Maintain an open-door policy, and an open mind, so that it's easy for individuals to approach you. Some members of your administrative staff, in particular, may be uncomfortable sharing their thoughts without a gentle nudge. Reach out to them directly to ensure their ideas are heard.

# 7

## Show You Care

Get to know your staff members so you can relate to them on a personal level. Make a point to ask about their hobbies and interests. The better you know them, the more effectively you'll be able to identify what motivates each one.



# 8

## Reward Creativity

Let your support staff know it's safe — and, in fact, encouraged — to come up with new ideas and put them into action. Your workers will know that you value their opinion. They'll also be more invested and engaged if they're working on something they came up with. If someone's suggestion for, say, streamlining the new vendor approval process doesn't work out as well as planned, don't get upset or criticize the person. Rather, treat it as a learning experience and encourage your workers to apply the lessons to other projects.

# 9

## Break Out of Comfort Zones

Encourage staff members to take on new responsibilities and projects outside of their typical roles. Make sure these assignments are manageable for individuals in terms of difficulty and workload, but also try to make them challenging enough that they help employees build skills and experience. By giving your workers a chance to try new things, you'll demonstrate your faith in them and prompt them to perform at a higher level.



# 10 Offer Training

Most professionals want to keep learning and improving their skills so they can advance in their careers. Support and encourage that desire to learn by offering training programs, mentoring and tuition assistance for work-related courses.

# 11 Discuss Career Aspirations

Just as it is important for your company to set objectives, it's crucial that your employees have career goals so they feel they're working toward something. Talk to your staff about their ambitions and work with them on plans for meeting those goals.

# 12 Promote From Within

If members of your staff believe they're stuck in the same job and are unable to advance, they'll quickly lose motivation. Promoting from within demonstrates that the organization is committed to helping them climb the corporate ladder, and they'll work harder to reach the next step. This isn't to say that you shouldn't consider bringing in outsiders to fill open positions, but regularly promoting your employees can do a lot for morale.

# 13 Criticize Constructively

When employees are doing a substandard job, let them know, but do it with care and tact. Never criticize an employee in front of his or her coworkers. Also, focus the discussion on the performance, not the person. In other words, if you think someone is turning in sloppy or incomplete work, don't say, "Why are you so careless these days?" Instead, point out the pattern of mistakes you're seeing, with specific examples, and discuss how the person might be able to do better in the future.

# 14 Offer a Helping Hand

Regularly check in with employees to ensure their workloads are manageable and let them know it's OK to seek assistance when they are overwhelmed. If work can't be handled by existing staff, bring in temporary professionals to help keep things on track. Interim staff can assist during peak demands or with special projects, easing the burden on existing employees.

# 15 Provide Rewards

Two-thirds of administrative professionals surveyed by OfficeTeam and the International Association of Administrative Professionals said they perform better when their efforts are recognized. Keep in mind that rewards don't have to be monetary. Extra days off, acknowledgement in company publications and the opportunity to broaden job responsibilities are just three examples of effective nonfinancial rewards.

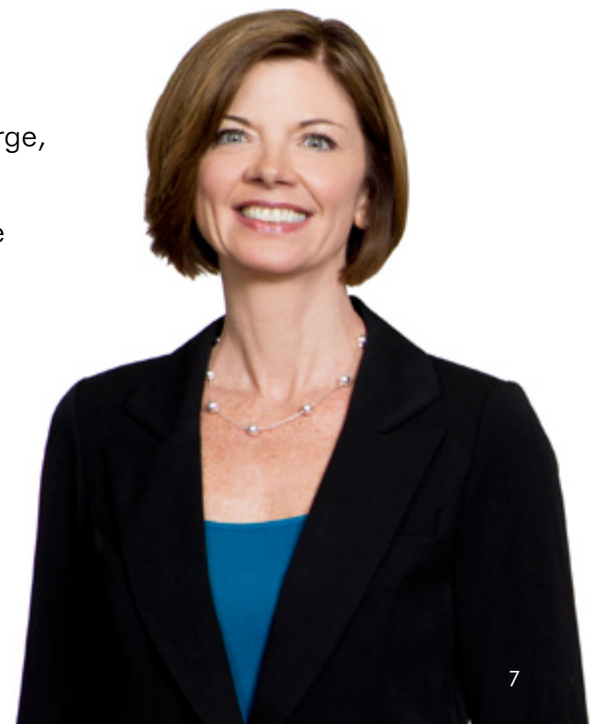


# 16 Be Liberal With Praise

Often, simple but heartfelt thanks will make an employee feel like his or her work matters. In fact, support staff said they value an in-person thank-you even more than a promotion or paid time off as a reward for a job well done.

# 17 Give Them a Break

Remind workers to take regular breaks to recharge, and set a good example by doing so yourself. If your team seems particularly stressed, organize a quick collective break where you can provide ice cream or a catered lunch.



# 18

## Say 'No' Tactfully

Whenever you have to say no to an employee's request

— whether it's for a raise, a day off or a change in hours — make sure you're not alienating the person with the manner in which you refuse. Be kind, give an explanation for your decision and try to phrase your response so the employee doesn't leave your office embarrassed.

# 19

## Keep an Eye on Salaries

No, money isn't the only reason people feel enthusiastic about their work, but it is a critical factor. Review the [OfficeTeam Salary Guide](#) to make sure you're offering pay that is slightly above average for your location and industry. If you're not, you might be inadvertently sending the message that you don't value your employees' contributions.



# 20

## Help Staff Achieve Work/Life Balance

In an [OfficeTeam survey](#), 28 percent of professionals cited work/life balance as the top contributor to their job satisfaction. Boost engagement by offering programs like telecommuting and flexible schedules, which help employees juggle their work and personal lives. Providing on-site services such as dry cleaning, child care or exercise facilities also allows workers to be more efficient with their time.

# 21

## Create a Place Where People Want to Work

Professionals feel more eager to come into the office if it's comfortable and clean and provides all the tools necessary to do the job effectively. They're also happier and more engaged when management promotes a clear commitment to basic courtesy and demands that employees treat each other with respect.

# 22

## Be Stingy With Meetings

If workers are constantly in meetings, they're more likely to feel disconnected from their regular assignments because they don't get enough uninterrupted time to concentrate on those tasks. Before you call a formal meeting, make sure it's really needed. It's equally important to keep these gatherings brief and to the point.



# 23

## Get Out of the Office

Whenever possible, hold training events, celebrations or similar activities off-site. A change of scenery can provide a break from routine and help professionals reconnect with their coworkers. Allow for some social time in the agenda; it can help enhance the spirit of teamwork.





# 24 Recognize the Signs of Low Morale

Many companies become aware of trouble with motivation and morale only when the problem reaches a tipping point. To prevent this, be alert to the early symptoms. These include a rise in absenteeism, complaints about customer service, poor performance from top employees or increased conflict between team members.



# 25 Learn From Those on the Way Out

Staff members who are leaving the company will sometimes be more frank and honest with you than those who are still on the job. Exit interviews can give you insight into ways your department can improve. Remember, though, that the departing employee may not be entirely objective. Take this into account when you're considering his or her comments.

# About OfficeTeam

OfficeTeam is the world's leading staffing service specializing in the temporary placement of highly skilled office and administrative support professionals, ranging from executive and administrative assistants to receptionists and customer service representatives. Throughout the year, we compile the data, trends and insights we uncover through our daily contact with clients and candidates and our extensive research on employment and workplace issues. We offer this information in the form of complimentary guides, articles and other materials. We have more than 300 offices worldwide and offer online job search services and career resources at [www.officeteam.com](http://www.officeteam.com). Please call **1.800.804.8367** for the office nearest you.



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