

Moving beyond engagement:

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# Why HR leaders are building a **culture of success**

jostleD |  HRDIVE



## Organizations have collectively spent billions of dollars on boosting employee engagement.

Despite pouring all that money (and investing all those hours) into solving the problem, engagement is the lowest it's been in a decade, and one-third of employees are still disengaged at work. Yikes.

We need to find a new approach. Engagement alone isn't cutting it, and it's especially failing us in this new world of work. Employees are distributed, distracted, and disconnected more than ever before. Even worse, not finding a solution costs \$7.8 trillion globally in lost productivity each year. As HR leaders, we are responsible for finding a solution that works—and helping make workplaces more connected, innovative, and energized.

The silver lining is that people want to be engaged. When Microsoft conducted an internal survey, employees cited “meaningful work” as essential to thriving in the workplace. Our challenge is to figure out how to evolve our thinking beyond engagement and ensure our initiatives have a more tangible impact on employees.

Because the world is different today, employees expect more from their employers. Fair salaries and supportive managers alone won't keep employees happy. People are pickier about their future employers and where they want to work. Employees want to make the world a better place—with many wanting to do so from their home office.

Instead of focusing on engagement alone, we should look at what we're hoping to accomplish—helping employees be successful at work. It's time to take a critical look at why our substantial investment in employee engagement has been backfiring and how to help employees be successful.

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## Employees are not engaged—**they're frustrated**

If all of these efforts to engage employees have resulted in disengagement, what's creating those conditions at our workplaces—despite our best efforts?

Consider this scenario. Let's say you spend all your efforts motivating employees to contribute. You pull out all the stops, and in the end, employees are fired up to do their best work. At first glance, everything looks great and should lead to a significant boost in employee engagement. But there's one problem: with all the focus on engagement, you forgot to ensure employees had the tools required to actually get their job done.

What's creating these conditions at our workplaces—despite our best efforts?



When employees are motivated to work but can't, or don't know if their efforts are making a difference, they're running head-first into the **wall of frustration**. This is why they disengage. They become frustrated that their organization isn't enabling them to do their job.

**When employees disengage, they tend to say the following things about their work:**

- I don't feel part of a successful team
- I don't believe that my work matters
- I don't feel connected to my co-workers
- I don't feel seen or recognized at my company
- I don't believe in my company's mission

**Sound familiar?** To break through this wall of frustration, you need to look at the whole picture. To do that means building a culture of success by focusing on employee success, not just engagement.





## The employee **success framework**

The employee success framework helps us understand how to build a culture of success in any organization. It begins when employees connect to their organization's values and start to feel like their work matters. But it doesn't stop there.

Once employees are motivated, they need to be given the right tools to contribute—without constant headaches and roadblocks. And when the hard work is done, the organization should come together as a whole to celebrate everyone's effort and contributions. That's what embracing a culture of employee success looks like.

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## The ingredients of employee success

These elements—engagement, enablement, and celebration—are the foundation of the employee success framework that will help your organization build a workplace where people thrive and love being a part of.

With a culture of success, you can expect your retention rates to rise, your productivity to soar, and your company culture to thrive. Why? Because employees feel connected. They feel empowered to do their best work. They feel seen and valued. **Now that's powerful.**

So, let's dive into these three elements and explore how you can put this power into practice.

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### Engage

Connect to the culture and believe in your work



### Enable

Find what you need and communicate it clearly



### Celebrate

Know that your contribution matters



## Success



## Engagement: Helping employees contribute

Engagement is about providing a sense of belonging in your organization that makes employees want to contribute. **By helping people connect to each other and the organization's value and purpose**, engagement begins to mean something different.

After all, "your employees are the ones making you money, but they can't make you money if they're disengaged," explains Jamie Notter, Co-Founder and Culture Strategist at PROPEL.

Engagement is about **providing a sense of belonging** in your organization that makes employees want to contribute.



One way to build engagement is to give employees insight into your company's strategy and what's driving your organization's success.

"I often see a really weak connection between employees and an organization because there's a lack of visibility on the strategic direction," explains Notter. With more communication (and having it live in one place), you can ensure your employees are engaged and on the same page.

#### Engaged employees:

- Are inspired by their work
- Believe in the company's mission
- Feel included in the organization

With more communication, you can ensure your employees are engaged and on the same page.







## Engagement in practice

Let's look at a few examples of how companies have countered disengagement to give you an idea of employee engagement in action.

Seera, the largest group of travel companies in the Middle East and North Africa region, wanted to create a greater sense of community in their company. The challenge? They have five offices across the Middle East, Africa, and Europe.

To make people (regardless of location or time zone) feel more included, connected, and inspired, they created a "Humans of Seera" series (inspired by the well-known Humans of New York) and brought employee stories to life from all around the globe, highlighting their diversity and creating an environment where everyone felt like they belonged.

Since launching the successful series in 2020, they've published dozens of stories, and it was so popular with employees that they eventually turned it into a video series!

Nevada Hand, an organization that runs assisted living facilities, has many shift workers. When employees on the night shift shared they felt disconnected and didn't know what was happening in the rest of the organization, their leaders took action by sharing notes from the daily standup meetings with the whole company. Not only did this keep night shift workers in the loop and boost connections, but it also **ensured everyone in the organization could better understand the company's mission.**

## Enablement: Helping people get work done

As an HR leader, consider making it easier for your employees to communicate across the organization and allowing people to easily find who and what they need—anytime and anywhere.

According to Adam Panucci, Director of Culture & Change at California Resources Corporation, these conversations aren't happening enough in HR. "I don't think enough time is spent on bringing people together to discuss how work gets done," says Panucci, "and I wish leaders knew how critical it is to focus on enablement to get the edge over your competitors."

There's also often a lot of noise in the workplace, but each person only has so much cognitive load (aka the amount of working memory resources used). To balance this, HR leaders should look to reduce friction and break down that wall of frustration. "Organizations need to start noticing the patterns inside their culture that generate friction because friction results in energy loss," explains Notter, "and enablement? It's about removing friction or impediments that make work harder than needed for employees."





Yes, tearing down the wall of frustration may have an upfront cost, but that cost may be even higher if you ignore it. “Either you pay now to fix the gaps, or you pay later because no one can find anything, and you can’t get things done,” says Panucci. And by removing the wall of frustration sooner, employee success can come sooner too.

### Enabled employees:

- Can communicate clearly with anyone in the organization
- Can quickly find the right people to support them
- Can easily find what they need to do their best work

By removing the wall of frustration sooner, employee success can come sooner too.



## Enablement in practice

Emperor is one of the UK's leading employee-owned creative consultancies. The company grew quickly from 120 to 200 employees and opened two new offices—outgrowing its existing internal communications tool.

To meet their new needs and enable employees, they moved all of their client portfolios into one library that employees could (and do!) depend on. To further bolster enablement, they also trained every staff member on how to add and manage documents so that files were always up to date and could easily be found anytime and anywhere.

With this fresh approach, Emperor increased transparency across its five offices, radically opened up the flow of information in its organization, and successfully enabled employees regardless of office location. **Now that's a win.**

Files were always up to date and could easily be found anytime and anywhere.





## Celebration: Employees know their contributions matter

Celebration is vital to make employees feel seen for their contributions. The first step is to recognize the efforts of employees. “There’s an intrinsic human need for recognition,” explains Notter. “They need to know that what they’re doing is working—and it ties directly back to success.”

But the real magic happens when you turn recognition into a social event. Then it becomes a celebration and creates a feeling of shared accomplishment that energizes your entire organization. “It’s part recognizing success and also part recognizing the impact we [as employees] have on each other,” says Notter. So while you can have annual reviews, spot bonuses, and team shout-outs, consider how you can inspire more peer-to-peer recognition.

Plus, “when you ensure each individual knows how they contribute to the bottom line, you increase a sense of belonging,” says Panucci.

## Celebrated employees:

- Believe that they're part of a successful team
- Feel seen and recognized by their organization
- Are energized and excited to contribute more

## Celebration in practice

Plexxus saw employees disconnected when office staff started working from home, but staff in hospitals and warehouses were still going in. **To recognize all of its departments and keep everyone connected**, the organization boosted its internal communications to acknowledge each team with initiatives like:

- **Frequent internal shout-outs** for their warehouse staff
- **Collecting successful projects** across the organization and turning them into a "Book of Excellence"
- **Posting a "day in the life"** article on a different department in the organization each month (a win-win by recognizing employees' contributions and reducing silos!)
- **Celebrating the company's 15th anniversary** through a series of virtual events and contests



# The power of a **culture of success**

When an employee knows they've made a contribution that matters, they become energized and want to contribute even more. This creates what we call the flywheel of success.

And once that flywheel is spinning, a culture of success emerges that energizes the entire organization. Shared accomplishment is viral—humans love to succeed.

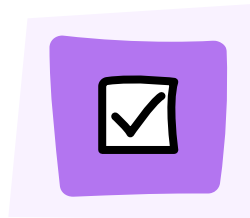
With a powered flywheel, employees will:



**Believe** in the company's direction and understand what matters.



**Find** what they need and who can help them without feeling blocked, lost, or overwhelmed.



**Work better** together and live your company's culture from anywhere, anytime.



**Know** their contributions are seen and matter.



**Feel** part of an extended, connected team accomplishing things together.

# Employee **success** at your organization

With these insights in hand, it's time to reflect on employee success at your organization.



What areas of impact (work, productivity, innovation, culture, retention) could be most improved at your organization?



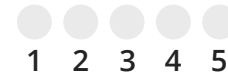
Reflect below: (1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither agree nor disagree; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly agree.



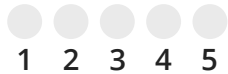
**My organization makes it easy to understand its direction and values**



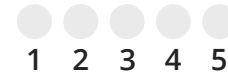
**Employees find it easy to find what they need to get work done**



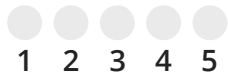
**Our organization's culture is united and thriving**



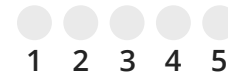
**Employees know that their work matters**



**Innovation is enabled at our organization**



**Employees are energized and eager to contribute**





## Put employee **success in action**

Jostle's so committed to this success framework they built a platform around it. Want to join the thousands of organizations moving to a culture of success?

Jostle will help you get started.





Jostle's employee success platform is where everyone connects, communicates, and celebrates at work. It's the heartbeat of our own company and has helped employees in over 1,000 organizations easily belong and contribute, anywhere, anytime. With industry-leading participation rates, we're putting the joy into work and the life into organizations.

**Move beyond engagement to increase productivity, boost productivity, and spread joy across your organization. [Book your free demo today.](#)**

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