

5 tried and tested ways to maintain employee engagement

 By [Andrew Bourne](#)

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Employee engagement, when done right, nurtures long-term relationships and contributes to an organisation's sustainability. Engaged employees commit themselves to their employer's goals, find satisfaction and meaning in the work they do, and have the potential to enhance business profitability.



Here are five simple yet effective ways to keep your workforce engaged:

1. Uphold two-way communication

Two-way communication keeps employees informed about work-related developments and gives them a platform to offer their suggestions and feedback. A lack of communication can lead to information silos and in some cases, may also lead to employees perceiving it as [mushroom management](#). To break silos and establish two-way communication, a flat organisational structure is a good place to start.

Next, consider using different communication channels that allow free flow of information for all parties at various levels, ie. between peers, managers, and the organisation. Apart from face-to-face and emails, introduce internal chat mediums, social intranet, and frequent business outlook updates. For instance, organisations can make use of virtual town hall meetings to enable their employees to communicate with their top leaders.

2. Facilitate employee development

For employees to work dedicatedly towards company goals, the first show of commitment has to always be the employer's. An employer has to be ready to make long-term investments in human capital development and provide opportunities for employees to expand their skill sets or be redeployed to new roles that fit their interests.

Moreover, for individuals to learn and perfect their work, it takes time. So there needs to be a culture of acceptance that encourages employees to learn from their mistakes without fear of being criticised. Similarly, experienced employees can be brought on board to mentor new employees. They can help interns understand what it takes to excel in their new roles and overcome work challenges.

3. Empower employees with trust

A culture built on trust empowers workers to become the best version of their work selves. Trust provides the mental space that every employee needs to hone their capabilities and deliver to their full potential. On the other hand, micromanagement introduces work fatigue and even the most spirited employees can lose interest when constantly monitored and badgered for updates.

Today, we continue to hear about how more and more companies are deploying [digital surveillance](#) and key logging software to make sure that their remote workers put in the necessary hours while working from home. These are just different forms of micromanagement and practices like these will not be sustainable in the long run. They can affect workplace dynamics and destroy trust relationships, the effects of which will reflect eventually in the attrition rate.



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4. Put the human back into human resources

Trying times like the present call for employee engagement approaches that prioritise individual well-being above all else. During such unprecedented circumstances, it's critical to allow employees the space to adapt to the new normal and regain balance between their professional and personal lives. Flexible work arrangements that allow employees to develop their own work schedules will come in useful. Also, acknowledge and act on concerns that hold back employees from doing their work. For instance, poor ergonomics while working from home can increase stress and affect productivity. A one-time allowance towards enabling employees to set-up a dedicated home office can help solve this.

To better help employees who are battling anxiety and mental health issues, consider bringing a psychologist on-board to enable them to navigate their overwhelming emotions under guidance. Wellness webinars can be organised to help employees maintain a healthier lifestyle amidst the lockdown and stay-at-home orders.

5. Align organisational values with workplace practices

Employees respect and gradually become loyal to an employer who stands for what they believe in and integrates the same within workplace practices. An organisation's key decisions must always be guided by its core values. At Zoho, we believe the cloud will power entire businesses and true to that vision, all our business operations including employee collaboration run only on Zoho applications to date. Another value close to our heart is the philosophy of [transnational localism](#) and as part of it, we have established more than 30 satellite offices in rural locations across various nations to help our employees stay close to their roots.

Strong employee engagement programmes are core to sustainable human capital management. They determine an organisation's capability to attract the right talent, build loyalty, and promote development. Moreover, amid testing times like the ongoing pandemic, continued employee engagement practices become all the more important for an organisation to assure employees of its investment towards the well-being of its workforce.

ABOUT ANDREW BOURNE

Andrew Bourne is Zoho's regional manager for the Africa region and is based in Cape Town, South Africa. He has more than 15 years of experience in sales and marketing and has spent the last five years focusing on the implementation and testing of various business technologies. He is very passionate about Zoho and has exceptional insight into the business and marketing world.

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