59 Employee Engagement Ideas
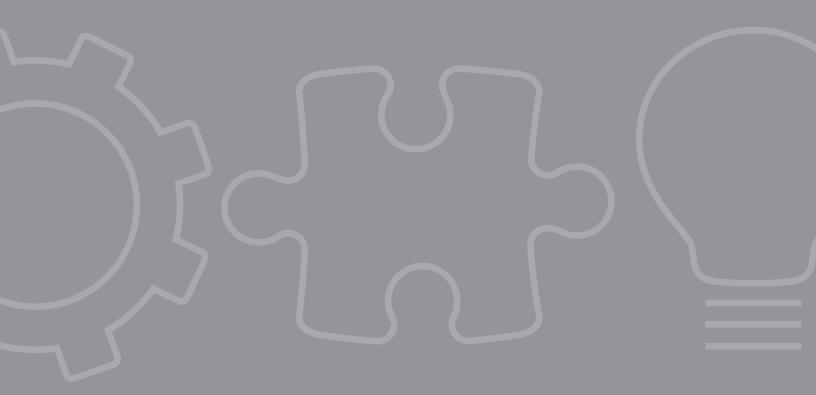## You Need to Know About
(+5 Bonus Ideas)

HR managers can agree that employee engagement and retention is at the top of their priority list.

Every company wants to attract and keep the best talent.

The problem?

Many employees in today's job market quickly feel uninspired by their work, get bored after 2 years and start job hunting for something new. So we decided to speak with some of the best HR professionals and business leaders around the country to find the strategies they recommend to keep employees engaged. There are also some tips below that have been really successful at our company.

Here are 59 employee engagement ideas that you should apply at your office.

1. OFFER HEALTHIER OPTIONS AT YOUR WORKPLACE

Jason Lauritsen, Director of Best Places to Work at Quantum Workplace, discusses how to increase employee engagement by making healthier foods available on-site:

> "**Three-fourths of employees** want access to a healthy cafeteria or vending options at their workplace, but **less than half of employers** actually offer it as a benefit. This creates a great opportunity. Not only will providing this benefit help organizations play a role in boosting productivity, increasing performance, and lowering healthcare costs, but we've also found that employees who work at organizations that provide healthy cafeteria or vending options are **10 percent more likely to be engaged.**"

2. ALIGN YOUR COMPANY WITH A PURPOSE

SnackNation CEO Sean Kelly recently gave a presentation at the HR Star Conference, a large gathering of human resources professionals.

The presentation, titled "Millennials in The Workplace", discussed how organizations can increase engagement with their millennial employees.

One of the key points Sean discussed was how important it is to align your company with an overall purpose. Don't focus on what you do, but why you do it.

As millennials quickly begin to dominate the workforce, this message becomes more and more important.

3. GET YOUR HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAM IN ORDER

Kevin Sheridan, New York Times best-selling Author of Building a Magnetic Culture, has helped some of the world's largest corporations improve their culture and foster productive engagement.

When we asked him what companies should be doing better to improve workplace engagement, he offered us this wisdom:

"The bottom line is that anyone who knows about employee engagement is also a firm believer in instituting health and wellness programs. There have been multiple scientific studies proving that health and wellness efforts not only yield higher productivity and engagement in the workplace but will also help reduce turnover as job stress is the #1 reason people quit (along with a lack of work-life balance which is related to wellness as well)."

4. GIVE YOUR PEOPLE "INSIDE" INFORMATION

Want to know a great way to get your team more involved and committed? Keep them up to date with "inside" information. These are things like the direction of the company and the challenges that the Leadership Team is facing.

Tim Sackett, HR Pro and President at HRU Technical Resources, explains this important part of your employee engagement strategy:

"The one true fact in all workplaces is your people want to be in the know, they want to be in the circle of trust. HR and leadership, in general, do a crappy job at this, and it has a huge impact to engagement. Find ways to make this happen and let your people know that it's "inside" information. Trusting your employees can handle it raises engagement."

5. CELEBRATE PERSONAL WINS

If someone on your team hits their monthly or quarterly goal, make it a win for your department or the whole company. Announce it to the rest of the team and celebrate with a Friday Happy Hour or fun outing.

6. EMPHASIZE WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance often seems like an impossible struggle. It's difficult to find that right balance between work and personal life to feel good that both areas are receiving enough attention.

Blake McCammon of Blogging4Jobs, a popular blog focused on HR and the workplace, had this to say about work-life balance's role in employee engagement:

> "Work-life balance is one of the most important things employers can do to help employees not only stay healthy and fit, but keep them engaged day by day. Provide a work from home scenario and flexible hours where employees with children or adults with hobbies are allowed the freedom to enjoy life to the fullest, but still get their work done."

7. PRAISE YOUR COWORKERS

It shouldn't only be left to managers to praise good work. When you hear about someone's achievement, go over and personally congratulate them. It'll mean a lot to that person and they'll likely do the same for you when your big wins come through.

8. LIVEN UP THE OFFICE

Try an open-office floor plan, incorporate plants and vegetation around the office, create collaboration spaces, or maybe get that cool arcade game that people have been dropping hints about.

9. HAVE MORE FUN

Take a half day Friday to do something fun together. Go on a scavenger hunt, play

sports outdoors, go paintballing or bowling. These social events help people bond with others on the team who they don't interact with on a daily basis and builds a better sense of community within your organization.

10. STAND FOR SOMETHING YOUR TEAM CAN BE PROUD OF

Irene Becker, voted as one of the Top 100 Employee Engagement Experts Online, answers the questions of how companies can drive and sustain employee engagement activities at a time when engagement is at an all time low:

"By showing our employees that we care, that we stand for something they can be proud of, and that we offer them meaningful, purposeful work and an opportunity to grow, learn, contribute and succeed because we know that success is a me to WE equation that starts with:

1. *Personal, professional development and a structure for growth, recognition and are alive in the organization.*

2. *Managers, mentors and trainers that are equipped to coach, inspire and bring out the best in their people.*

3. *Communities of purpose; groups that are centered around a purpose driven business, CSR or community activity are alive, aligning shared values and mission with collaboration.*

4. *Transparency of communication and the integrity of the organizations commitment to growth, recognition and the optimization of individual and collective potential is mirrored in new ways of developing team spirit and vertical/horizontal collaboration.*

5. *Human interaction, social activities that engage our people as human beings in the human side of being part of a vibrant, growing, thriving culture."*

11. SEND OUT AN EMPLOYEE SURVEY TO GET HONEST FEEDBACK

Sometimes it's a lot easier for employees to say how they really feel in an anonymous survey. Actually, it's always easier when it's anonymous.

Use a tool like TINYpulse or SurveyMonkey to create a survey and send it out to your team. Surveys are one of the few ways to actually measure and track engagement, so definitely make this part of your efforts.

Ask questions like:

1. How are you feeling? What's the morale you see around you?
2. Good Idea (what one thing will make the biggest improvement in your job, your team or the organization?)
3. How satisfied are you with your opportunities for professional growth?
4. Do you have a good working relationship with your manager?
5. Are you satisfied with your overall compensation?

12. FIND OUT YOUR TEAM'S PASSIONS

Are they into mountain biking? Do they write a personal blog? Do they want to backpack around Southeast Asia next summer?
Know what your team is passionate about. It'll help you connect with them and show them that you actually care about their interests.

13. PROMOTE PERKS THAT BOOST MENTAL & PHYSICAL WELLBEING

Perks can help make your office a more fun place to work.

JellyVision Interactive Marketing offers these awesome unique perks to their employees:

- Unlimited vacation days (with the assumption this privilege won't be abused)
- The ability to work from home whenever necessary or work out an

unconventional schedule
- On-site yoga and a free healthy catered lunches every week
- Company refrigerators and cupboards stocked with fruit and healthy snacks
- A yearly Wellness Day featuring free 15-minute back massages for every employee and a taste test of unusual, healthy juices
- Mustache Day (a sort of mustache-themed Halloween that culminates in a fancy lunch out)
- Frequent company-wide involvement in charity fun runs

14. CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE OF ENTHUSIASM AND POSITIVE ENERGY

Give high-fives for no reason, encourage each other to "crush" the day, ring a gong when a sale comes through.

15. PROVIDE ONGOING COACHING AND TRAINING

Coaching and mentoring shouldn't stop after an employee's initial on-boarding process. A study done by Deloitte in 2012 found that r etention is 25% higher for employees who have engaged in company-sponsored mentorship.

Some people in your organization will proactively seek mentors and training, while others will need it to come directly from their manager. Offer an optional weekly coaching session to discuss strategies and tactics that can help each member of the department improve in their role.

16. OPEN CONSISTENT LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Ask the managers of your organization to setup a weekly meeting to see where their direct reports need resources, any new ideas they have, and how things are going in their role. You'll find that both managers and direct reports will look forward to these meetings and use them like a strategy session to improve their department on a weekly basis.

17. CAPTURE THE MAGIC OF YOUR TEAM'S "I'S"

"To improve employee engagement, capture the magic of the I's in team: integrity, initiative, individual talents, and invaluable diversity. Highlight each individual's talents and how they contribute to the whole."
–Kate Nasser, The People Skills Coach

18. MAKE SURE NEW HIRES GET TO KNOW THE WHOLE TEAM

We all get to know our bosses and direct reports pretty well, but it's also important for new team members to build relationships with the rest of the staff.

UserVoice demonstrates this point well – they invite the whole staff to a game night whenever someone new joins the company. The company offers free beer, a game (think board games or pool/ping-pond/darts) and a "ridiculous sort of quiz" they invented.

19. SHOW EMPLOYEES HOW THEIR JOB TIES TO THE VISION

Your company has undoubtedly recorded its vision and goals for the year. Why not show employees exactly how their jobs advance the vision? This will boost each employee's investment in the success of the company instead of just feeling like a cog in the wheel.

20. ALLOW LATERAL MOVEMENT WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION

There are times when employees (especially the younger ones) are still figuring out their career paths. If a member of your team finds something else at your company that they're passionate about and want to pursue, create a roadmap to get them there. This will help you retain some of your young talent when they might have otherwise abandoned ship.

21. GIVE YOUR EMPLOYEES MORE RESPONSIBILITY, NOT JUST MORE TASKS TO DO

Working at a company that highly values morale has given me some interesting insight on how to engage employees. I've noticed that the times my coworkers are incredibly devoted to our work, where states of "flow" seem to be abundant, are when they are given real responsibility.

This shouldn't be confused with giving your team more things or tasks to do. I'm talking about giving them important projects and initiatives to take ownership of and knock out of the park. Humans are inherently goal-oriented, so when you give them something worth achieving, I believe you'll be amazed at how much purpose and drive it gives them.

If you're a manager, give one of your direct reports an important project to be the lead on. On the flip side, ask your manager to take on a project that you think will help you grow and learn something new.

Even if it's something you have no experience doing – when you see your goal as being important to the success of the company you'll find a way to get it done. And I promise you'll feel more purpose from your work than ever.

22. KNOW YOUR COMPANY CULTURE AND HIRE BY IT

If you know your company culture and hire by it, you'll continue to bring people onboard who want to work with the person next to them.

23. ENCOURAGE VOLUNTEERING

Show your commitment to community and social responsibility by giving your employees a couple of hours each month to get out of the office and participate in community service.

24. CELEBRATE YOUR TEAM

Make your team members feel special on their birthdays, work anniversaries, their first day of work, etc. CEO's and Co-Founders – write a hand written note to your employees for these celebrations (they go a long way).

25. HOLD OFFICE HOURS

This employee engagement idea is especially significant for upper management. Holding office hours is a great way to make yourself more approachable to the entire company. Allow people to come in for office hours to give feedback, talk concerns, and explore new ideas.

26. BUILD MORE TRUST

An overbearing boss who is constantly micromanaging might just be the fastest way to create disengagement. Trust your employees to accomplish the work you give them without checking up on them 4 times a day.

27. SEND OUT SOME MONDAY MOTIVATION

Find an inspirational quote or page from a book and send it out to your team on Monday mornings. It's a super easy way to get people motivated and inspired and a day that's typically slow to start.

28. CREATE A ROADMAP TO ACHIEVE PROFESSIONAL GOALS

Find out what your employees' professional goals are and make sure they're on a track to achieve those goals. Managers should sit down with their direct reports and plan the roadmap to get them to that next promotion or to acquire the skills they desire.

29. INCENTIVIZE GOALS

Create some healthy competition and reward excellent performance with incentives for successful goal achievement. Tickets to a game, dinner for two or are inexpensive ideas that can help people feel more invested in their work.

30. HAVE A WEEKLY FOOD DAY

Pick a day of the week where one employee brings in treats to share with the team. Eventually, looking forward to food day will be a major bonding moment for the whole team. Not to mention some employees will even love the chance to show off their baking prowess.

31. TAKE WEEKLY SONG REQUESTS

It's Friday afternoon and your whole office is united by one thought: going home. Reinvigorate the team by taking song requests to blast over the PA system in the final hour of the workweek. Employees will love sharing their favorite songs to boost morale.

32. PUT SOMEONE IN THE HOT SEAT

Engage your employees with a quick bonding event at the beginning of your weekly meetings. Pick one employee and tape a "hot seat" sign to their chair. For the first minute of the meeting, other employees will shout out their favorite things about the person in the hot seat.

33. START A LEARNING CLUB

Get your employees more engaged in their work by asking them to think big. Start a learning club where employees select books or videos related to your work for everyone to enjoy. Pick a day where everyone piles into a conference room to discuss the item and its implications for your work.

34. START A NEWSLETTER

But instead of having the "head honchos" or even Human Resources send it, form a committee of employees who want to coordinate it. The volunteers will love the chance to share what they find important and the readers will love getting company news from their peers.

35. BAN EMAILS FOR A DAY

Pick one day every month to ban emailing. If someone has a question, they'll

have to go talk to their coworkers in person. Even if they only talk for a few seconds, that face-to-face interaction with coworkers makes priceless employee engagement moments.

36. SHOW THEM THE "PEOPLE" RESULTS OF THEIR WORK

If you send recaps of company progress to your employees, don't just tell them your customers are happy, show them. Add a glowing testimonial from your customer base, clients or nonprofit constituency to the email so your employees can see how their work impacts real people.

37. ALWAYS ACT ON FEEDBACK

Let's say you survey your employees monthly to find out how they're feeling. While some of their desires and wishes might be difficult to act on, send them updates explaining the progress you've made towards addressing their concerns, even if it's just scheduling a meeting with your CEO. Not acting on employees' valuable feedback will kill employee engagement.

38. CONSIDER MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Dust off that old triangle chart we all know and love from Psychology 101, because Maslow's hierarchy might have implications for employee engagement. Beyond the salary and the benefits, employees want to know that their work matters.

Try working the implications of their efforts into annual reviews instead of just focusing on their performance. While it's wonderful they completed a special project on time and within budget, go a step further and explain the project's greater impact on the company.

39. USE GLASSDOOR TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

Glassdoor offers a raw source of employee feedback that might be incredibly valuable if you're brave enough to dig into it. Even if the comments seem negative, they could give you insight into how your

employees really feel. As you sort through comments, revealing patterns should emerge to spotlight areas of employee relations you need to improve.

40. LET THEM EXPERIENCE A DAY IN THE LIFE OF...

Send out an Excel sheet with a list of positions in your company or department and have employees vote for a position they would like to do for a day. Let the person currently in that position give them a day of training before they launch into their day on the job.

41. BRING IN A SPECIALIST

With research showing a large chunk of the workforce does not feel engaged at work (see the featured image at the top of this post), the availability of employee engagement tools and services has skyrocketed. For you, that means you can find help if you're completely lost. For example, some companies have brought in something called a corporate anthropologist who will study your company and your employees with the end goal of improving the overall business.

42. ENGAGE EMPLOYEES THROUGH GAMIFICATION

Some people invest more in the games they play after work than they do in their actual work...the work that pays the bills. Why is that? Games leverage instant feedback and compelling goals to keep players coming back for more. Now, companies like Bunchball hope to bring these elements into workplaces to engage employees in ways that go beyond a regular paycheck and benefits.

43. LET THEM DITCH A TASK

Ask your employees which tasks they hate above all others. Sometimes, even one dreaded task might create the feeling of on-the-job misery. Look at the list carefully and consider how you can juggle some responsibilities to make everyone happier. One employee's most hated task could be another's favorite.

44. STOP BEFORE YOU START

This post from the Talent Space Blog says the first step in any employee engagement initiative is to stop. This stop gives you time to consider why you're starting the initiative in the first place and to think about barriers to success. Condense your reason for starting the initiative into a mission statement that you can use to guide you through every move, so you don't get bogged down with unnecessary initiatives.

45. DEMONSTRATE GENUINE CARE

The Disney Institute believes consistently demonstrating genuine care makes employees feel happy and engaged. You can demonstrate genuine care in endless ways. One of the Institute's ideas involves finding out what's bugging your team. Maybe they hate their office chair or would love to have some upbeat music playing while they work. In this case, it's the little things that go a long way in showing you care.

46. HAVE COMPLETELY OPEN BRAINSTORMS

Throw away that meeting rule book and schedule meetings without agendas or target outcomes. Have completely open brainstorm meetings where you throw away limitations and volley around some big ideas. Guide the discussion by throwing out an area of your business you would like to improve.

47. HAVE PROBLEM-SOLVING MEETINGS

Everyone takes a different approach to problem-solving. Schedule meetings where you reveal a big problem facing the company with complete transparency. Let employees take a crack at explaining how they would solve it. Employees will feel more engaged in company outcomes and they might just solve a few problems while they're at it.

48. GIVE THEM OWNERSHIP OF EVENT PLANNING

Who has a better handle on the events your employees will love than your employees themselves? Instead of trying to think of company outings that

your whole team will love, get your team involved in the planning process. Ask for event ideas and seek out volunteers who want to coordinate regular outings.

49. START AN OFFICE DESIGN COMMITTEE

While it might seem superficial at first glance, giving your employees a chance to be more invested in what they look at everyday could do wonders for engagement. Start an employee design committee to let your employees take some ownership in the place they work. Plus, the personal touches will make the office feel like home.

50. DEFINE WHAT EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT MEANS FOR YOUR COMPANY

If you're struggling to come up with employee engagement ideas, it might be time to take a step back. The word "employee engagement" alone doesn't give you anything you can visualize. Try considering what it means for your own employees to be engaged specifically. Once you figure out what employee engagement looks like in your company, you can set your sights on achieving it.

51. HAVE SHOW AND TELL

Your employees probably have tons of ideas that could help the company. However, they might not have anywhere to share them. Have a quarterly show and tell where employees can present tools, information and ideas they believe might do the company good.

52. GET EMPLOYEES INVOLVED IN LONG-TERM PROJECTS

Organize employees from different departments into teams to tackle long-term projects that involve responsibilities outside of their typical scope of work. Not only will they get to know people they don't work with on a day-to-day basis, they'll pick up skills from one another as they work on important projects.

53. SET GROUND RULES FOR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

It's not just company policies that make people disengaged at work. It might also be close-minded coworkers that shut down their ideas. Set an expectation that your employees follow a "yes and…" mindset. This simply means creating a culture where everyone's ideas are met with open minds, and not negativity.

54. BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF EXPLANATION

When you send an employee work with changes or request a re-do, make sure those requests come along with a detailed explanation. Employees who always see their worked rejected or marked up will become frustrated and disengaged. Explaining the changes helps them understand your thought process and increases their desire to improve.

55. OFFER POINTS FOR TAKING WORK-RELATED COURSES

The internet is exploding with a selection of free, open source courses from major universities. Many of your employees would probably love to take one, but simply don't have the free time. Come up with a points system in your office that offers employees incentives for taking work-related courses. Maybe they get bonus points if they give a presentation on what they learned.

56. TALK TO THEM ABOUT THEIR SCHEDULES

Your employees might seem distracted or disengaged, but maybe it has nothing to do with work. Let's say Karen's daughter has a piano recital every Wednesday at 4 PM and she's distant at that time, wishing she could be there. Find out what outside events might be keeping your employees distracted and work with them to adjust their schedules to accommodate their busy lives.

57. START A "DISTRACTED" JAR

There will be times when your team feels like they can't possibly focus. Show them that you understand (and have a sense of humor about it) by creating a "distracted jar." Fill it with activities, jokes and even things to Google when they feel like they can't work for another minute. Help them get the distractions out of their system so they can continue on with an engaged workday.

58. START A "VENT" BOX

A vent box is the evil twin of the suggestion box. Encourage employees to fill the box with their complaints, but be sure to keep anonymity sacred. Your employees' deepest frustrations might also be excellent opportunities for learning.

59. INVITE THEM TO MORE MEETINGS

While I'm a big proponent of creating more meeting for people, this one is a little different. If you're meeting with management about big things happening in your company, invite your team to join you and listen in. You can make the invite optional, but everyone will appreciate the invitation to be in the know.

60. REMIND PEOPLE WHY THEY CHOSE TO WORK THERE

Ask your team to write down why they work at the company and how working there ties into their personal and professional goals. This simple exercise is a great way to boost engagement.

61. PAY PEOPLE TO LEAVE

This is a controversial idea made popular by Zappos, but we think it's a creative way to ensure only motivated employees work at the organization.

62. WEEKLY RECOGNITION CALL

Make a weekly meeting (preferably end of week) to gather as a team and have everyone recognize someone else's hard work that week.

63. GIVE FINANCIAL OWNERSHIP

Create a stock ownership or profit sharing plan to give people "skin in the game". Many companies have used this to increase employee happiness and reduce turnover.

64. SPONSOR A COMPANY OFFSITE

Company offsites are a lot of fun and a great way for everyone to get involved in brainstorming new ideas to drive the company forward.