



HOW GALLUP MEASURES EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Gallup measures employee engagement based on workers' responses to its Q¹² survey, which consists of 12 actionable workplace elements with proven links to performance outcomes. To identify these elements, Gallup spent years conducting thousands of interviews at every level of various organizations, in most industries, and in several countries. Since Gallup finalized the Q¹² question wording in the late 1990s, the survey has been administered to more than 25 million employees in 189 different countries and 69 languages. The following items are the ones that emerged from Gallup's pioneering research as the best predictors of employee and workgroup performance.

GALLUP'S Q¹²[®]

- 01** I know what is expected of me at work.
- 02** I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.
- 03** At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
- 04** In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.
- 05** My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.
- 06** There is someone at work who encourages my development.
- 07** At work, my opinions seem to count.
- 08** The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.
- 09** My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.
- 10** I have a best friend at work.
- 11** In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.
- 12** This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

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Four Stages of Employee Engagement

In addition to discovering the 12 items, Gallup also found that the order of the items is important. The 12 items represent the four stages of a hierarchy that an employee goes through on the path to complete engagement. Items 1 and 2 represent employees' primary needs. When employees start a new role, their needs are basic. They ask, "What do I get from this role?"

In the second stage, encompassing items 3 through 6, employees think about their own individual contributions and consider how others view and value their efforts. Manager support is most important here because managers typically define perceptions of value.

Once employees advance through the first two stages of the hierarchy, their perspective begins to widen and they evaluate their connection to the team and the organization. In the third stage, encompassing items 7 through 10, employees ask themselves, "Do I belong?" Then, during the fourth and most advanced stage, composed of items 11 and 12, employees want to make improvements, learn, grow, innovate, and apply their new ideas.

The four stages help managers evaluate workgroup performance and concentrate their efforts on areas most relevant to where their team is on the journey to complete engagement.

GALLUP EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT CATEGORIES

1 **Engaged** employees work with passion and feel a profound connection to their company.

They drive innovation and move the organization forward.

2 **Not Engaged** employees are essentially “checked out.” They’re sleepwalking through their workday, putting time — but not energy or passion — into their work.

3 **Actively Disengaged** employees aren’t just unhappy at work; they’re busy acting out their unhappiness.

Every day, these workers undermine what their engaged coworkers accomplish.

Three Types of Employees

Based on employees’ responses to the 12 items, Gallup groups them into one of three categories: engaged, not engaged, and actively disengaged.

Not engaged workers can be difficult to spot: They are not hostile or disruptive. They show up and kill time with little or no concern about customers, productivity, profitability, waste, safety, mission and purpose of the teams, or developing customers. They are thinking about lunch or their next break. They are essentially “checked out.” Surprisingly, these people are not only a part of your support staff or sales team, but they are also sitting on your executive committee.

Actively disengaged employees are more or less out to damage their company. They monopolize managers’ time; have more on-the-job accidents; account for more quality defects; contribute to “shrinkage,” as theft is called; are sicker; miss more days; and quit at a higher rate than engaged employees do. Whatever the engaged do — such as solving problems, innovating, and creating new customers — the actively disengaged try to undo.

On the other hand, engaged employees are the best colleagues. They cooperate to build an organization, institution, or agency, and they are behind everything good that happens there. These employees are involved in, enthusiastic about, and committed to their work. They know the scope of their jobs and look for new and better ways to achieve outcomes. They are 100% psychologically committed to their work. And, they are the only people in an organization who create new customers.

By consistently tracking Q¹² results from year to year and developing the right data-based interventions to promote growth, employers will ensure that their workforce is meeting its potential and maximizing its performance outcomes.

Taking Employee Engagement to the Next Level

After a baseline reading of an organization's employee engagement level following the first companywide Q¹² administration, Gallup provides customized tools and analysis to help leaders take the necessary next steps. After all, measurement without targeted action is useless. Moreover, if employers do not follow up on engagement results, employees' disengagement may actually increase. By consistently tracking Q¹² results from year to year and developing the right data-based interventions to promote growth, employers will ensure that their workforce is meeting its potential and maximizing its performance outcomes.

Additionally, Gallup developed empirical indexes to help companies strategically pinpoint and improve specific focus areas relevant to their current situation. For example, Gallup has found that the companies that increase employee engagement the most are those that hold all employees accountable for taking action on their Q¹² results. By adding the Accountability Index to the Q¹² survey, companies can track each workgroup's efforts toward making progress on engagement goals.

The Brand Ambassador Index offers a valuable opportunity to measure the strength of employees' connection to their organization's brand. Gallup's research shows that employees who know what their organization stands for and what differentiates it from its competitors tend to be more engaged, and they more actively support and endorse their company's products and services.

By using one or more of these 18 indexes in conjunction with the Q¹² metric, leaders have another tool with which to capture more of their organization's story. Gallup's empirical indexes offer companies actionable insights on a range of important topics, including change management, communication, customer orientation, innovation, and supervisor effectiveness.

The Power of Engagement

Leaders often say that their organization's greatest asset is its people — but in reality, this is only true when those employees are fully engaged in their jobs. Engaged workers stand apart from their not engaged and actively disengaged counterparts because of the discretionary effort they consistently bring to their roles day after day. These employees willingly go the extra mile because of their strong emotional connection to their organization. Reaching this unique state goes beyond having a merely satisfactory experience at work to one of 100% psychological commitment. Any employee can achieve this state in an engaging workplace, but leaders can be sure they are creating and maintaining this type of environment only if they actively measure and manage the true drivers of engagement. Gallup created and continues to test the Q¹² metric to help organizations harness the power of engaged employees in the most efficient and actionable way possible. 

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