

GALLUP CONSULTING®

Engagement Items Resource Guide

Engagement and Productivity: Basic Needs

Q01. I know what is expected of me at work.

What Does It Mean?

Knowing what is expected is more than a job description. It is a detailed understanding of how what one person is supposed to do fits in with what others are doing, and how that changes depending on the circumstances.

Why Is It Asked?

Even in jobs with high role clarity, employees still have a hard time giving this item a “5.” Gallup’s research shows that this most basic element of engagement predicts future patterns of turnover, customer engagement, safety incidences, and productivity.

How Does It Help?

Substantial gains on this item alone often correlate to productivity gains of 5 to 10%. When done right, this item defines success on the job.

Qo2. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my job right.

What Does It Mean?

This element helps managers understand the needs of their employees in relation to the outcomes they are trying to achieve. Great managers then position their resources accordingly. It helps workgroups get the materials they need to achieve their outcomes. To drive engagement on this item, managers need to determine what it really means to their employees. Sometimes they are referring to accessibility of information rather than specific things.

Why Is It Asked?

Less than one in three people strongly agree that they have what they need to do their job right. This is the best indicator of job stress.

How Does It Help?

Groups with higher scores on this item average 20 to 40% higher attrition than those with lower scores. It is also one of the strongest indicators of customer engagement. It also predicts employee retention, safety and productivity.

Engagement and Productivity: Management Support

Q03. At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.

What Does It Mean?

To get the most from your team, you must maximize the opportunities your employees have to use their strengths. It is important that each individual understands their strengths and weaknesses so they can build on them or work around them to achieve success.

Why Is It Asked?

The most powerful benefit a manager can provide an employee is positioning them in a role that allows them to excel using their natural talents.

How Does It Help?

This item brings a unique depth that no other element matches. It is imperative that managers place their employees in the right role. Those in the top quartile of the Gallup database experiences 10% - 15% greater revenue performance.

Qo4. In the last seven days I have received recognition or praise.

What Does It Mean?

Recognition is honest and based on measurable outcomes. This item can encourage behaviors that result in the desired outcomes. Workplaces that excel on this item rely on forms of this that are specific, predictable, frequent, and instantaneous. Great managers are known to promote an environment that is strong in this area, recognition is delivered from every direction, not solely the manager.

Why Is It Asked?

Twenty percent (20%) of people in organizations believe that they are wholly unrecognized. Positive reinforcement is necessary for motivation on the job and is woefully low in the corporate world.

How Does It Help?

A large multi-company study showed that a population shift in recognition from one-third of an organization to one-half of the organization improved customer scores by 2% and increased productivity by 6.5%. Those in the top quartile are 2.5 times more likely to say they are satisfied with their compensation. Those in the bottom quartile are 2 times more likely to leave the organization within a year.

Why “Seven” Days?

The time limit on recognition is what makes this element correlate to essential business outcomes. Psychologically committed employees get the motivation to create positive outcomes by receiving positive feedback at least once every seven days.

Q05. My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.

What Does It Mean?

This engagement item means about setting each person up for success.”

Why Is It Asked?

Emotions matter. People don't just bring a pair of hands to work, but they bring their whole self — and that includes the part that needs someone to care about them.

How Does It Help?

A productive workplace is one in which people feel safe — safe enough to experiment, to challenge, to share information, to support each other, and in which team members will give the organization the benefit of the doubt. Those within the bottom quartile have 37% more turnover.

Why “Or Someone?”

Employees respond favorably to someone at work caring about them as a person and the outcomes associated with a positive answer. This element helps highlight how engagement is not just the work of a manager, but the work of the entire team.

Qo6. There is someone at work who encourages my development.

What Does It Mean?

Development does not mean promotion. This item focuses on optimizing individual contribution to the team by emotionally supporting individuals' needs for growth. Development is a process for understanding employees' unique needs, and finding roles, positions, and projects that meet those needs.

Why Is It Asked?

It is difficult, if not impossible, to get traction on the other 11 elements if development is lacking. A mere 1% of individuals who have no support for their development are able to achieve real engagement with the other 11 items.

How Does It Help?

Developing others drives significant impact on the other 11 elements, and driving all elements in concert creates significant impacts on everything. In particular, this item helps increase employee retention.

Engagement and Productivity: Teamwork

Qo7. At work, my opinions seem to count.

What Does It Mean?

To a large extent, this item is about an employee's sense of belonging. Employees who give a high score to this element feel they have access to channels of communication across different levels of the organization. Their managers work to maintain these channels.

Why Is It Asked?

Employees want to feel valued. Groups do not function well when team members feel that they are insignificant or irrelevant. Additionally, employees who believe their opinions count exhibit strong psychological ownership of advancing ideas within the organization because of the perceived input they have within that process.

How Does It Help?

More than one-half of individuals who agree with this item believe that their best ideas come out in their work. Additionally, this item builds employees' trust and a higher level of respect for their organization. Organizations that have 33% of employees who strongly affirm this will increase their organization's profitability by 6%.

Qo8. The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.

What Does It Mean?

Employees want to believe in what their employers do. This item measures to what extent this is true. It focuses on maximizing individual and group contribution by appealing to the employee's values.

Why Is It Asked?

When employees agree with this item, the connection they feel between their personal mission and their company makes them want to do more.

How Does It Help?

Mission-driven workgroups have 15 to 30% lower turnover and **30%-50% fewer accidents**. Additionally, they experience profitability that is 5 to 15% higher than their peer workgroups.

Q09. My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.

What Does It Mean?

This element measures to what extent an employee feels his or her team is committed to doing quality work. Involved in this element is a keen awareness of work standards and of group members' performance.

Why Is It Asked?

Only one in three employees strongly agree with this statement. The measurement is highly sensitive to the presence or absence of "slackers." Once a team is free of lower performing workers, the proportion of engaged people dramatically improves to more than 50%. This element can also help teams work with individuals who are miscast in their roles.

How Does It Help?

High marks for this item can be correlated to an improvement in nearly all metrics Gallup has studied. In particular, this item has shown strong correlations to a team's work with customers and safety.

Q10. I have a best friend at work.

What Does It Mean?

This element deals with optimizing group contributions by enhancing the quality of relationships between employees in the workplace. This, in turn, leads to nurturing trust and emotional loyalty.

Why Is It Asked?

This item is highly predictive of performance. Helping people build bridges instead of walls at work improves performance. If employees strongly disagree to this item, they are lonely and isolated at work. As Americans spend more time at work, work can become less of a one-dimensional activity and can be a channel for meeting the social needs of life. Friends are more likely to help each other out, work harder for each other. Stronger alliances at work impact individual levels of wellbeing, happiness and employee engagement.

Q10. I have a best friend at work.

How Does It Help?

Workgroups that get great scores on this element average 20% fewer accidents and 5 to 10% better customer ratings.

Why “Best” Friend?

Something about a deep sense of affiliation with the people in an employee’s team drive them to do positive things for the business they would not otherwise do. Research revealed a very different social bond amongst employees in top performing teams. Standard survey questions about trust do not appear to measure trust. This wording best discriminates between sufficiently supportive friendships that are only surface level and are unlikely to withstand adversity. Also, friendships are susceptible to “social desirability”, meaning that respondents feel it is socially desirable to prove an answer that casts them in a good light (i.e. people are more likely to report they read the newspaper when they don’t, or say they voted when they didn’t). Simply asking people if they have friends is not enough, most people prefer to think others like them or don’t want to confess to isolation. Gallup has tested nearly every variation of this question and the word “best” is what separates average- performing workgroups from high-performing workgroups.

Engagement and Productivity: Growth

Q11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.

What Does It Mean?

This item measures the how important an employee feels to their business. It seeks reflection on how he or she understands they are doing, how their work is perceived, and where their work is leading them. Feedback predicts performance. High scoring groups establish structured feedback processes for their team members, including clearly defined goals and achievement levels.

Why Is It Asked?

When both the manager, or mentor, and the employee identify a task at which the employee truly excels, they can work together to create a development plan that supports the individual's full learning potential. This will position the employee to make his or her greatest contribution to the organization. Those in the top quartile of the Gallup database are 10 – 15% more productive and have 20 – 40% fewer accidents.

Engagement and Productivity: Growth

Q11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.

How Does It Help?

Business units in the top quartile of this item see 10 to 15% higher productivity than units in the bottom quartile.

Why “Six” Months?

The feedback loop must be fluid and contain the positive developments that an employee has contributed. If regular discussions about progress occur in an organization 9 in 10 employees view the system of development as fair.

Q12. This last year, I have had opportunities at work, to learn and grow.

What Does It Mean?

The need to learn and grow is a natural human instinct. This element measures the degree to which an employee feels they have been given that opportunity.

Why Is It Asked?

For many people, this is the element that distinguishes a “career” from a “job.”

How Does It Help?

Employees who have the opportunity to learn and grow at work are twice as likely as those on the other end of the scale to say they will spend their career with their company. Workgroups that score high on this element produce more innovative ideas, superior customer relationships, and are more profitable. The top quartile on this item have 9% higher customer scores and 10% better revenue performance.

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