

A Réncái Guide

5 Tips To Improve Employee Engagement in 2019 For SMB's

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“Customers will never love your company until your employees love it first”

5 Common Employee Engagement Opportunities

1. Communication

2. Flexible Working

3. Feedback / creating an open culture

4. Career planning

5. Recognition

Over the last couple of years, the topic of employee engagement has been heavily analysed by many leadership teams. Progressive leaders such as the likes of Richard Branson, firmly support the idea that your employees work the closest with your customers and therefore, if they are engaged, then customer satisfaction and company performance will naturally increase. However, there's still a pool of traditional leaders who believe that engagement is a fad and that the best way to drive performance is through robust business processes and up to date technology.

Working with a variety of businesses over the last two years, we've had consistent recommendations from employees on the areas they'd recommend their employers focus on to improve their employee experience, enjoyment of their role and ultimately their engagement to their company.

In this guide we're sharing five of these most common areas with you along with some recommendations on changes and initiatives you could implement easily within your business. Most of the recommendations are ideas that have existed for a while however, they are not consistently actioned, due to engagement being an “**important** but **not urgent**” topic”.

87% of employees worldwide are not engaged at work

Gallup

I often see SMB's (small-medium business) struggle as they grow above fifty employees. One of the reasons that many struggle is down to communication.

During times of growth, whether organically or through acquisition, communication gives employees reassurance, guidance and the confidence that their employer is heading in a direction that aligns to their motivations and values.

An internal communications strategy is a simple to implement and cost effective way to keep your workforce engaged however, for some reason we're all pretty rubbish at it - even those who are good at it, typically struggle with consistency

So, how do you improve your internal communications?



Quarterly lunch

Invite a randomly selected group of employees to go for lunch with a member of the leadership team once per quarter. This is a great way to get feedback on what could be improved within the business, along with talking employees through the leadership team plans.



1 to 1's

Managers to begin monthly / quarterly short meetings to capture employee insight and feedback to the leadership team.



Companies with highly engaged workforces **outperform their peers by 147%**

Gallup



Internal newsletter

Newsletter to provide key business updates, recognise employees for achievements and improve insight on what has been going on within the business.



Communication champions

People within the business who are responsible for bridging the gap between employees and leadership. Providing feedback to the leadership team, whilst communicating updates to the workforce.

In recent years flexible working has moved from being an employee benefit, to now being a critical employee attraction tool for many businesses across the UK.

With the environment constantly changing around us, it is critical that we have policies and processes that ensure we can recruit the best talent. Flexible working policies should also be a key consideration for employers wishing to take a proactive approach to considering employee wellbeing and mental health.

Many people in my network often kick back and claim that “flexible working is not relevant for every industry”. However, I would argue that there is a key difference between **FLEXIBLE** working and **REMOTE** working.

Flexible working may mean giving your employees the chance to come in and finish earlier. Whereas remote working often means working from home. A great example of the difference, can be taken from one of my friends who works in quality assurance for a manufacturing business in Manchester. It would be unrealistic for him to work from home, unless he was looking to build a very long conveyor belt...! However, he has the option to start at 7.30am every day and then on Fridays he finishes at 1.30pm instead of 5pm.



“If you can’t trust your employees to work at home, then why hire them in the first place?”

So, how do you implement a flexible working strategy?

✓ Ask for feedback

Do your employees want the opportunity to work flexibly? Do they want to work remotely?

Completing short focus groups can be a very effective way to establish the flexible working policies to compliment your business and employees.

✓ Objectives and benefits

What are your objectives and potential business benefits of implementing a flexible or remote working strategy?

✓ Governance

What governance are you going to put in place? e.g. agreed sign off processes, KPI's

Link to employee wellbeing plans

This should be a focus area for all employers if they do not have known models in place to support employee wellbeing.

Considering your flexible working policies alongside wellbeing will ensure you develop policies and initiatives that complement each other rather than conflict.

A trend that many businesses have followed in the past is to make crucial business decisions at a leadership level and then push their agenda down to employees.

Alternatively, employers have conducted long, tedious annual surveys that are poor from an efficiency perspective and have very little return on investment for the employees

A modern progressive approach is to regularly ask for feedback from employees, which then enables you to shape your strategy around the insight – this is often linked to improved adoption of new initiatives, systems and processes.



So, how do you capture feedback?

✓ Review what you have done historically

What is the trend of asking for employee feedback within your business? Have you never asked for it? Have you done annual surveys? Have you done ad-hoc questionnaires?

✓ Decide on what tool / process you want to implement

How often do you want to capture feedback? Are you going to use a digital tool or will your managers conduct this face to face?

✓ Review

Once you have captured the feedback, you then need to look for themes and trends.

✓ Action / goal setting

It is crucial that when you ask employees for feedback, that they see things change. Set 3-5 business actions off the back of the feedback.

✓ Communicate

Most importantly, ensure that you communicate throughout the feedback process. Why are you asking for feedback? What will be done with the feedback? What are your actions? When are you going to implement them?

Through our work over the last twelve months, it has become evident that a key driver for many employees is to have a clear career progression path within their business.

However, one area where a lot of employers go wrong, is assuming that this path has to include a promotion to become a people manager. The reality is, that there are many ways in which an employee can progress, without needing to lead a team.

For example, sometimes employees may receive an improved reward and benefits package or they may get access to further training etc.

So, how do you create a clear planning strategy?



Ask for individual feedback

Once again, it comes back to asking for employee feedback. It is critical that each employee has a unique career path, that is designed for them.



Regularly revisit

Whether it is during manager 1-1's or conducted by your HR team, it is important for you to revisit this with them regularly.



More than 80% of workers are either actively looking for a new job or are open to one

Ajilon



Set goals and recognise achievements

If the employee has a clear goal, then typically they will be motivated to try and reach this.



Emphasise the importance of the individual

Who is the person that can impact their path? The individual. Therefore, it is crucial that you as an employer, emphasise the importance for the individual to drive their own career development, supported by the framework that you provide them with.

Recognition is another cheap and simple to implement solution, that can lead to transformational business results.

A recognition strategy is often used to tie in with other processes, and acts as a motivator and confidence builder for employees, as well as ensuring that they feel valued. In a labour market, where unemployment is at its lowest for decades, it is crucial that every single one of your employees receives appreciation for their efforts.



So, how do you implement a recognition strategy?

✓ How often do you want to recognise employees?

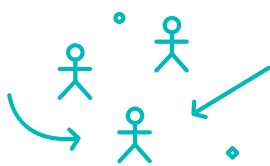
Weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually? Most of our existing clients have found success with a monthly focus.

✓ What do you want to recognise employees for?

Good performance, practising company values, great collaboration, customer satisfaction, length of service etc.

✓ How do you want to recognise employees?

Gift vouchers, monetary, annual leave buy backs, events, concerts, weekends away with the family, sporting events, desk drops or even just an email to say well done or thanks!



As mentioned during the introduction, none of the above are re-inventing the wheel however, I am sure that there are many contacts in my SMB network who are not consistently practising these processes.

The suggestions are based on employee insight that we have captured from businesses across the UK sized between 20-400 employees, across sectors such as: Recruitment, Real Estate, Technology, Higher Education and Telecommunications.



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Harry works as an Employee Engagement and People Strategy consultant for Rencai. Working with businesses across the UK he spends the majority of the time helping business leaders in SMB's. Helping them review and update their People Plans and launch Employee Engagement strategies with a continuous improvement mindset.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about how a consistent focus on Employee Engagement can have a highly positive impact on your employees and customers, reach out to a member of the Rencai team as we'd be very happy to help.

Speak to the Rencai team in the office today
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