

Engagement Rebounds to Near Pre-Pandemic Levels

2024 survey reveals the benefit of assessing engagement outcomes

The (Q4) 2024 Employee Engagement Index (EEI) Survey by Engage2Excel delivers encouraging news for business leaders worried about reports of widespread employee disengagement. Employee engagement in the US climbed by nearly five percentage points between 2022 and 2024, reaching 68.3%, the highest level since 2018.

Employee engagement surveys are popular because organizations believe they can leverage employee engagement for positive organizational outcomes, such as higher retention, greater customer satisfaction and improved financial performance.

The EEI Survey began in 2016 and was developed by Dr. Jack Wiley, Engage2Excel’s chief scientific officer, an award-winning organizational psychologist with over three decades of experience helping leaders and their organizations achieve optimal performance.

The Post-Pandemic Rebound in Engagement

Table 1 shows the Employee Engagement Index scores over the five administrations of our national survey. The 2018 data, collected during a growing economy, show the highest results at 69.0%. The 2020 stats, collected immediately before the onset of the pandemic, show a decline of three points to 66.0%. The 2022 results, in the aftermath of significant social unrest and the onset of monetary inflation, indicate the lowest score at 63.6%.

Survey Demographics

- Number of Respondents: 5,000
- Countries Represented: United States
- Industries Represented: All major industries
- Respondent Demographics: US adult workers in all job types with proportionate representation of gender, age group and race/ethnic origin
- Margin of Error: 95% confidence level +/- 1.5%

Table 1: Employee Engagement Index (EEI) Trend

Year	% Favorable	% Neutral	% Unfavorable
2016	63.0%	21.0%	15.0%
2018	69.0%	20.0%	12.0%
2020	66.0%	21.0%	14.0%
2022	63.6%	21.2%	15.2%
2024	68.3%	19.5%	12.1%

However, the 2024 post-pandemic results show the Employee Engagement Index score rebounding significantly to 68.3%. An almost five percentage-point swing in national engagement results over two years is indeed a noteworthy finding. Details about the EEI Survey are provided on the following pages.

Table 2: 2024 Survey Results: Employee Engagement Index Items

Employee Survey Item	% Favorable	% Neutral	% Unfavorable
Considering everything, I am satisfied with my organization as a place to work.	71.2	18.4	10.5
I am proud to tell people I work for my organization.	69.7	20.8	9.5
I would recommend my organization as a great place to work.	67.1	18.9	14.0
I intend to be working for my organization for a long time.	68.4	18.8	12.8
My organization motivates people to work hard and put in extra effort when needed.	65.3	20.8	13.9
Employee Engagement Index Score	68.3	19.5	12.1

The Current State of Employee Engagement

Table 2 shows that the 2024 Employee Engagement Index score indicates that 68.3% of the United States workforce is engaged. Among the individual items, overall satisfaction received the highest favorable score, while discretionary effort had the lowest. However, the scores for these items fall within a narrow range of 65% to 71%.

A favorable response is when a survey respondent agrees or strongly agrees, while an unfavorable response is when they disagree or strongly disagree. A neutral response indicates neither agreement nor disagreement. Unlike some surveys that use only the “top box” score, in this case “strongly agree,” to measure employee engagement, we believe this approach understates true engagement levels in the workforce.

How EEI Differs from Other Surveys

Employee engagement is generally defined by several key components, including enthusiasm for work, commitment, organizational pride, alignment with organizational goals, and the willingness to exert discretionary effort. Dr. Wiley defines employee engagement as the extent to which employees are motivated

to contribute to organizational success and are willing to apply discretionary effort to accomplishing tasks important to achieving organizational goals.

The EEI Survey measures employee engagement as a motivational construct or desired psychological state. An engaged workforce is one in which employees take pride in and are satisfied with their organization as a place to work, advocate for and intend to remain with their organization. They see their organization encouraging employees to apply discretionary effort to finish their work. The Employee Engagement Index was created by using the items presented below, which respondents rate on a balanced, five-point Likert agreement scale:

- **I am proud to tell people I work for my organization (Pride)**
- **Considering everything, I am satisfied with my organization as a place to work (Overall Satisfaction)**
- **I would recommend my organization as a place to work (Advocacy)**
- **I intend to be working for my organization for a long time (Commitment)**
- **My organization motivates people to work hard and put in extra effort when needed (Discretionary Effort)**

The Drivers of Employee Engagement

Among HR professionals today, it is axiomatic that “employee experience” is the means to the “employee engagement” end. But, more precisely, what current employee experiences drive employee engagement? We can answer that question using advanced statistics applied to our national survey database. Statistical regression analysis reveals the following six macro-drivers of employee engagement:

- **Employees are recognized by their manager for a job well done.**
- **Employees envision a promising future where they can achieve their career goals.**
- **Senior management inspires confidence in the organization’s success through open and honest two-way communication.**
- **Exciting work assignments provide employees with a sense of accomplishment.**
- **Employees feel that they are part of a team with cooperative coworkers.**

- **Employees are supported in their efforts to balance family/personal responsibilities.**

From these macro-drivers we can see that several agents influence employee engagement: the manager, who influences recognition and career development; senior managers, who inspire confidence in the future; the work itself; cooperative and supportive coworkers; and progressive, employee-oriented company policies.

This analysis suggests that organizations aiming to boost employee engagement should support and reinforce the mentioned employee experiences, as they frequently drive engagement. While the drivers of engagement may be unique to each organization’s circumstances and are best identified at the organizational level, these drivers provide an excellent starting point for managing engagement in any context, even without organization-specific data.

Key Takeaways

- **To effectively leverage employee engagement, it’s essential to first assess the current engagement levels using a reliable measurement system. Then, identify and enhance the key employee experience drivers that need support and improvement. These practices result in better employee retention, increased customer satisfaction, and higher business success.**
- **Without engagement survey data for your organization, relying too heavily on reports of widespread employee disengagement when creating engagement and recognition strategies may cause you to overlook the positive indicators of engagement outcomes highlighted in this research report.**
- **The rebound of 2024 engagement to near pre-pandemic levels is good news for organizations that seek to invest in enterprise-wide employee engagement and recognition programs to facilitate improved business performance.**

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