

Seven Habits

That Are Stalling Your Employee Engagement Program And How To Fix Them



Let's face it: Top talent is difficult to find.

Skilled employees don't just want a steady job. An excellent culture, a sense of purpose, company prospects, and many other factors have **overtaken compensation and job security** as the most important factors in the decision to join an organization, stick around, and, more importantly, perform at one's best.

It's not just a generational thing; it's a **workforce thing**. Technology has given us all an unprecedented ability to find, assess, and connect with new opportunities. Switching companies doesn't require the leap of faith it once did. And LinkedIn provides insider access to everyone, illuminating everything from the interview process to company culture and what salary range to expect.

The world has changed. And yet, traditional methods of engaging and retaining our people continue to reign supreme. Organizations are using engagement methods that just are not fast enough to keep pace with demand from employees and leaders—even in the face of higher attrition, shorter tenures, and increased recruiting costs.

Along with these traditional methods come several bad habits that are costing today's organizations **millions of dollars each year** in lost performance and talent. While these habits may have represented the cutting edge five to ten years ago, they now represent a lost opportunity to truly understand, collaborate with, and improve the engagement and commitment levels of today's

employees. As the world continues to become more agile, more connected, and more real-time, these mistakes will become glaring.

It's time to bring employee engagement into the future. High-performing organizations are adopting modern technologies that will drive energy, focus, and performance at work.

This whitepaper will help you evaluate and update your employee engagement and retention strategies. Read on to...

- explore the latest challenges and demands on engagement and retention programs,
- learn about seven bad habits of today's organizations that undermine strategy,
- pick up seven future-ready habits that high-performing organizations use to be more effective, more predictive, and more impactful on business results.

Discover why it's time to make a change—and how you can change your habits to become a high-performing organization of the future.

Emerging Trends Impacting Employee Engagement

Four trends in the workplace have made employee engagement a front-burner issue that organizations can no longer ignore.

The hiring dynamic has flipped.

Due to a global [scarcity of top talent](#), skilled employees now have the ability to pick and choose where they want to work—and what they want to get out of it. That means more responsibility lies with employers to accommodate the demands of top talent (within reason). If employees aren't getting what they feel they need, whether that's recognition, growth opportunities, a sense of purpose or [any number of things](#), they are likely to leave.

Giving “Rock Star Talent” A New Meaning

The shortage of top talent like engineers, for example, is so severe that employee-focused [talent agencies](#) are popping up with the sole purpose of seeking out new opportunities for engineers and fighting for highly desirable employment situations for top talent.

The majority of employees are candidates for another job

It's no secret that a loyalty-centric employment value proposition is essentially a thing of the past. In addition to the overwhelming evidence that we're in a “seller's market” when it comes to recruiting talent, today's workforce is also disillusioned, with strong memories of the fallout of the economic meltdown of 2008-2009. Employees learned the hard way that employer loyalty will only extend so far—and realized that when it comes to career development and job security, it's every-person-for-herself.

This mentality, combined with unprecedented access to one's professional and personal networks, means “job hopping” isn't a taboo, at least not for the Millennial generation. In fact, it's almost expected of high performers—57% of Millennials believe that changing jobs often is [good for their careers](#).

The data agrees: More employees are switching jobs more frequently, and those who aren't leaving are increasingly open to it. The “quit rate” [increased 17%](#) in 2015. Active jobseekers (those enthusiastically looking for new opportunities) are

now **30% of the workforce**. And “warm, passive” candidates—those who are open to speaking with a recruiter or are already reaching out to their networks—now make up 57% of the workforce.

It is equally concerning that the **overwhelming majority** of organizations admit to being unclear when it comes to what motivates their people. It’s no coincidence that most employees have at least one foot out the door. Getting a grip on how to engage and retain employees is now a major differentiator for high-performing organizations.

Employer brands are a reflection of the employee voice—for better or worse

Historically, the employer brand was controlled in tandem by the HR and Marketing departments. It was their job to post happy-looking pictures of their employees to the company website and highlight their volunteer programs to create and maintain a positive reputation.

Today, that public image lies squarely in the hands of current and former employees, who are more than willing to leave brutally honest reviews of everyday life at an organization on social media. Just as Yelp and Rotten Tomatoes are the new sources of truth when choosing a restaurant or movie, potential employees will diligently consult Glassdoor or Indeed.com about the organization before choosing to apply, interview, or accept an offer.

With **half of jobseekers** consulting these crowdsourced reviews to help in their employment decisions, negative assessments have a big impact on potential talent who are evaluating the organization’s culture online. The good news is, by improving employee engagement and opening the lines of communication between leadership and employees, organizations can help convert

Is your company on trend? Then 87 percent of your employees could be open to a new job. Maybe it’s time to go against the grain.





We communicate in a way that's always on and increasingly real-time.

negative sentiment before it becomes a PSA as to why they shouldn't interview with your company.

People are connected in ways we previously thought unimaginable

Most workplaces today would be unrecognizable to Don Draper or Gordon Gekko. How we communicate and collaborate with our coworkers, peers, and leaders has undergone significant change since *Wall Street*. We work in “borderless” environments, defined not by walls or even geography, but rather common projects and goals. Connecting with a colleague on a different continent is only slightly more challenging than one in the next cubicle.

We communicate in a way that's always on and increasingly real-time: social networks have forever altered our expectations for the

immediacy and reach of our interactions. Real-time feedback is pervasive. Our personal decisions are increasingly crowdsourced, with opinions from strangers on Yelp or Amazon holding far more weight than advertisements and salespeople.

Additionally, technology has helped us do amazing things. In the past ten years, we've seen an incredible explosion of innovative technology in both the consumer and business worlds that makes just about anything seem possible. A video call can take place from nearly any location on earth. Smart thermostats learn from our habits and adjust to our lifestyles in real time, leading to more efficient energy usage. We even [have pills](#) that track the effectiveness of our medications and connect directly to our doctors in real time.

And yet, when it comes to having our finger on the pulse of what motivates our employees, our go-to approaches are viewed by managers as holdouts from the industrial age. [Eighty percent of organizations](#) still rely on slower processes like the annual engagement survey and exit interviews. These practices served employers well when people had little access to real-time information and executives were most concerned with broad, company-wide trends. Times have changed. Why are we coughing up [\\$1B each year](#) on arduous, time consuming processes on which most leaders don't even know how to close the

loop? Why aren't we doing a better job of using technology to create both engaged employees and thriving organizations that win?

Luckily, an influx of new technologies are revolutionizing the way high-performing organizations measure and improve employee engagement. Nearly 87% of organizations recognize the need to [reevaluate their current engagement strategies](#); two thirds of HR teams are looking to revamp their entire employee engagement strategy.

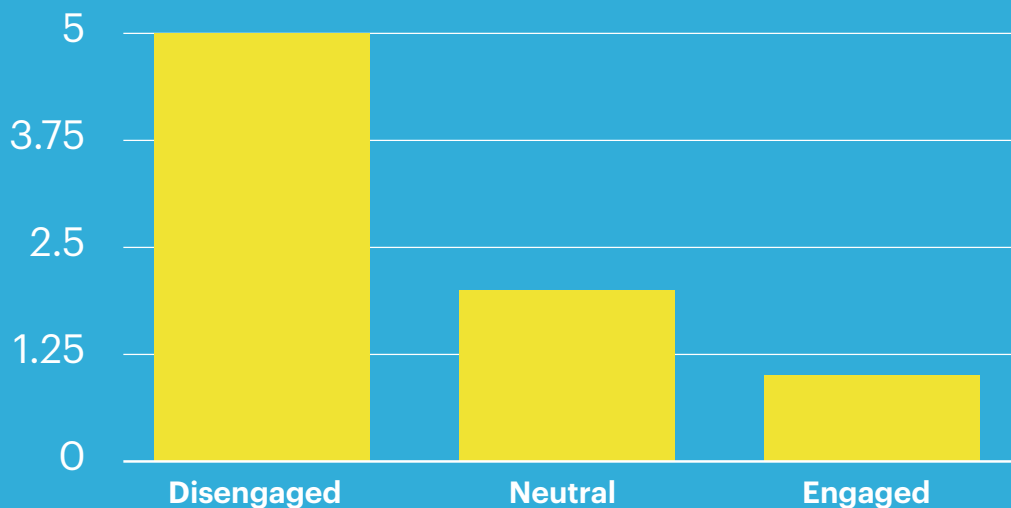
It's time for
organizations
to step up.

This Organization Powered by...Real-Time People Data?

Growing numbers of high-performing organizations aren't waiting for retention problems to become widespread. They are making employee engagement a priority today. Why the urgency? Myriad studies have revealed the [links between engagement and business outcomes](#) like productivity, customer satisfaction, safety, sales performance, and profitability. Glint's

proprietary data shows that employees with low engagement scores are five times more likely to leave the company in the next six months than are highly engaged employees. In 12 months, that likelihood increases to 12 times.

Likelihood to Leave In Next Six Months:



Measure up: Are you on pace with today's high-performing organizations?

Here are seven of the most common bad habits of organizations when it comes to keeping a finger on the pulse of employee engagement, and how high-performing organizations are changing their strategies to build stronger workplaces that thrive.

Bad Habit #1: The annual engagement survey.

Try this: Ask employees for feedback throughout the year and review results in real time.

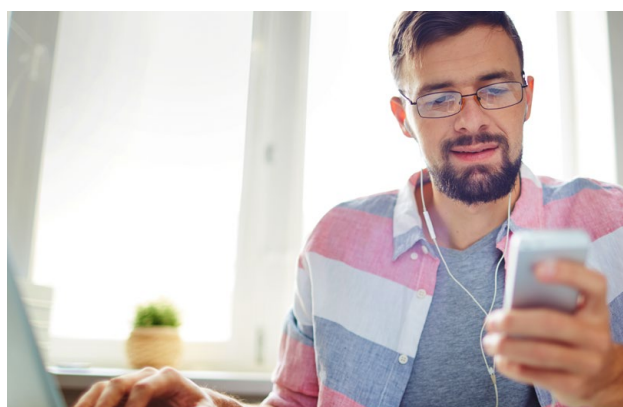
The vast majority of organizations still spend a significant amount of money each year on annual engagement surveys. **Several problems exist with this concept:**

1. Results of the annual survey represent a disconnected snapshot in time. While results may be comprehensive, they are unable to illuminate the organization's changing dynamics throughout the year, responses to events and trends, and urgent needs that may arise at any time.
2. Results of the annual survey also typically take weeks or months to make their way back to the HR team and leaders, squandering the post-survey momentum to act and limiting the relevance of action-taking to the state of affairs at the time of the survey.
3. What's more, annual survey results are handed down in the form of static and heavily detailed reports. Static reporting doesn't allow leaders and analysts to explore results investigatively, understand trends and hotspots that can lead to retention or performance issues, or receive intelligent advice on demand.

In short, the annual survey often falls short on its promise to generate focused, effective, business-relevant action at all levels in the organization.

High-performing organizations today rely on frequent, regular measurement and tracking of their highly important metrics, with real-time dashboards for things like finance, marketing, and sales. Tracking metrics in real time allows leaders to quickly identify issues and take quick action. The way employees feel about their work changes throughout the year, and many engagement drivers are far more dynamic than the annual engagement survey can measure.

HR leaders at high-performing organizations are taking a page from the book of their executive peers and implementing real-time people dashboards. They gather frequent, comprehensive engagement data, so they have visibility into current status and trends, and empower the HR team, leaders, and managers to track progress and course correct in real time as well.



Case Study:

Breaking the Habit: How More Frequent Feedback Helps Marketo Grow

Marketo is a quickly-growing marketing automation company with a global footprint. In 2014, Joan Burke, the SVP of HR, recognized that because the workforce was growing and changing so quickly, the annual survey results didn't represent up to half of the workforce by year end.

Marketo moved to quarterly measurement with data that was analyzed instantly as results came in. Joan and her organization abide by the philosophy that "feedback is a gift." Frequent employee feedback from quarterly pulses allows her and her team to respond quickly to challenges that are identified in the data, responding to employee needs in real time, rather than months later.

Says Joan, "The ability to pulse frequently, so we can continuously keep a finger on the pulse of engagement, and the data it provides, is so much more compelling. It really gives us a sense of how people are feeling."

Bad Habit #2: Using static high and low scores to dictate your company's strategy.

Try this: Understand the impact of drivers to discover what's really important to your people.

Organizations often place too much focus on industry statistics and broad management maxims to drive their engagement strategies. Bold claims such as, "The number one reason employees leave is because they don't feel valued by their organization" are proliferated as truth.

Yet, every organization is different—with a unique formula for what makes it successful. As such, workforce dynamics at each organization are unique, and in order to realize its unique vision for success, each organization must illuminate and act on its unique DNA for engaging its people.

High or low scores are just the beginning of the story; It's important to understand the impact of those drivers on employee engagement at the individual organization. Understanding which drivers affect your organization uniquely, may help determine which levers to prioritize to achieve the desired outcome.

Leading organizations focus action plans on areas that have low scores and a high impact on strategic objectives (e.g., engagement, retention, operational reliability, customer satisfaction). Take Company C above as an example, where Career was a low-scoring item across the whole company and had a very high impact on engagement and retention. The scores on Recognition were similarly unfavorable on average but there were many teams with high scores, and Recognition's impact on retention was smaller than was Career's. Understanding the impact of engagement drivers in addition to the level and distribution of scores allows organizations to make more effective decisions about their people strategies.

According to Glint data, the most impactful drivers of engagement vary widely among organizations. Here are three real, anonymized examples from Glint's database:

Company A

1. Culture 2. Purpose 3. Career

Company B

1. Prospects 2. Belonging 3. Leadership

Company C

1. Career 2. Growth 3. Recognition

Bad Habit #3: Fixing engagement challenges for your former employees.

Try this: Harness predictive analytics to raise the red flag before it's too late.

When you create an appointment on your calendar, chances are your smartphone takes charge: it automatically analyzes distance and traffic behind the scenes, and sends you a notification to let you know when to leave and what route to take. That's the power of predictive technology—that's the future.

For most organizations, the people “warning system” isn't an alert that pops up when problems exist beneath the surface. It's usually a gut feeling. Or a candid hallway conversation. Or, more likely, a trend in exit interview data. Capturing valid reasons why people quit is hard enough when departing employees have little incentive to be honest (and risk burning bridges). Projecting those reasons as consistent with the feelings of your remaining employees only adds to the challenge. If our personal smartphones can provide automatic notifications based on traffic data and past trends, why aren't more organizations being warned when their people are likely to leave, or underperform?

According to Glint data, when engagement scores for any group trend down over two pulses, even within the span of a month, those groups will have 50% higher attrition rates than those whose scores remained the same, regardless of



absolute score. Meanwhile, those groups whose scores trended up had 30% lower attrition rates. In other words, even your most engaged teams may be at risk when scores drop and meaningful changes to engagement, and attrition rates can actually happen within a month. Falling scores in certain areas, like Career, also contribute to future turnover more aggressively than others—trends that today's technology is capable of identifying and surfacing before problems begin. Early warning systems, like alerts and automated insights, which identify patterns, predict outcomes, and surface key improvement areas are helping organizations keep employee engagement problems from becoming employee retention and performance problems.

Bad Habit #4: A one-size-fits-all strategy.

Try this: Tailor action plans to each team's unique needs.

The key to efficient advertising has always been targeting. We instinctively know that an advertisement for high-end sleeping bags will fare better in an adventure magazine than on a beauty blog. Advertising dollars spent on an audience with no potential to buy are wasted resources. Just as different consumer demographics have different tastes and aspirations, different employee groups have different goals and motivations. Even within a single organization, every business unit, location, generation, or (name your favorite employee "demographic") may have a different mix of drivers and motivational factors that lead them to higher level of engagement.

Today's high-performance organizations recognize that when it comes to engaging employees, a one-size-fits-all approach truly translates to one-size-fits-none. These organizations embrace technology that allows

them to identify what motivates each team and employee group and take targeted action based on each group's data to respond to their unique challenges.

Just like in digital advertising, where algorithms analyze millions of data points in real time to recommend most impactful placement of ads, engagement technologies are beginning to utilize these capabilities. Artificial Intelligence programs can analyze team data automatically, and provide recommendations for improving engagement based on factors like high and low scores, correlations of drivers with key outcomes, benchmark data, and past trends. These programs then use industry best practices to recommend courses of action to improve engagement. With these systems, organizations have the tools and the resources to have an ongoing impact on the engagement and performance of teams.

Top Drivers of Engagement Can Vary Greatly By Team:



[TOP DRIVERS OF 3 TEAMS AT COMPANY A]

Bad Habit #5: Engagement data is guarded under lock and key.

Try this: Empower managers with the data to take ownership and impact engagement.

Moving toward a more localized approach for employee engagement—using data to identify groups’ unique challenges and building tailored solutions—means the HR team can no longer be its keeper. Devoting the time to communicating, tailoring approaches, taking action, and tracking progress for every individual team would not only be a full-time job for the HR team, but would also fail to be effective.

In too many organizations, engagement data is primarily used by HR and the C-Suite, neglecting managers as an integral part of the solution. Managers are employees’ strongest link between their day-to-day activities and the organizational vision. They’re the best equipped to understand the motivations, goals, and challenges faced

by their people, and to take the most effective action to improve engagement. Leaving them out of the equation, or excusing them from their responsibility, is recipe for the status quo.

High-performing organizations embrace the manager-employee relationship and give managers the tools—the data, the training, and the responsibility—to take ownership of employee engagement. They empower managers to lead action planning with their teams and take action to improve engagement. And HR, the people development experts and the only team responsible for the entire organization, becomes the champions, the coaches, and the encouragers.

In too many organizations, engagement data is primarily used by HR and the C-Suite

Case Study:

Breaking the Habit: Empowering Managers with Engagement Data at FICO

FICO is an analytics software company that helps businesses drive higher levels of growth, profitability, and customer satisfaction. The organization embraces the philosophy that high-quality managers are the primary influence on engaged team members. As the company became more geographically dispersed, it was ever more important to engage employees to maintain cohesiveness. But its annual engagement survey provided only static reports that didn't equip managers with the insight and ongoing support to help them respond effectively to engagement challenges.

FICO re-evaluated its approach, implementing a strategy that provided managers with more granular engagement data, allowing them to explore, and better understand, the engagement dynamics on their teams. With on-demand access to the data, managers were empowered to drill down, filter team results, and ultimately take ownership of engagement on their teams. As a result, managers were re-energized around engagement.

As CHRO Rich Deal put it, by equipping managers, “We were sending a very clear message [to employees]: We care about how you're feeling.”

Bad Habit #6: Leaving the employee out of employee engagement.

Try this: Use engagement data to create an ongoing conversation organization-wide

Engagement scores, the impact of drivers, and the tools in managers' hands are the beginning of a great story. But without contextual, frequent conversations with employees to add color to identified challenges, to illuminate root causes and to provide feedback on solutions, any actions taken run the risk of missing the point or quickly becoming irrelevant.

There's a reason [10% of Fortune 500 companies](#) have done away with formal annual performance reviews in favor of more frequent, informal check-ins. Today's workforce values [inclusion, coaching, and ongoing feedback](#). Frequent conversations about employee engagement make employees include in the process, and provide an opportunity for ongoing feedback at all levels of the organization.

Here's how high-performing organizations make it happen: It starts with the leadership team and the HR team, which build enthusiasm for employee engagement initiatives and train the most important influencers—managers—to understand, communicate, and take action on engagement data. Executives must be exemplars in the process and HR's role is trusted advisor (not administrator!). Managers are then equipped to use engagement data to create an ongoing

dialogue about what motivates their people and how to build the most effective team, and to work with their teams to build action plans and track progress.

When these conversations take place at every level, on a regular basis, employee engagement becomes a part of the organization's toolkit when it comes to change. Data and action plans become an ongoing part of planning at every level of the organization, an integral component of the business strategy. Imagine a world where engagement results and actions are a standard part of monthly status reports and the engagement dashboard is integrated with the financial dashboard in executive team meetings. Leading organizations are creating a regular dialogue about engagement to involve and partner with employees to create an environment where employees can thrive.

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Bad Habit #7: Maintaining the organization's most important metric in a silo.

Try this: Prove the linkage between employee engagement and business performance.

Many organizations accept that engagement is tied to [all sorts of business outcomes](#), from retention and performance to customer satisfaction and profitability. Yet, in most, engagement data remains isolated. It isn't correlated with other key performance indicators to create a linkage between them. What is the

value to the business of an increase in employee engagement? What's the value of measuring and improving it?

High-performing organizations recognize that employees drive the business through their energy, focus, and commitment. For these

Imagine a world where engagement data is linked with business outcomes.



organizations, engagement scores are reliable leading indicators of success for people (e.g., performance), teams (e.g., creative output), and business units (e.g., operating margin).

Employee retention, individual and team performance, customer satisfaction, safety, even profitability are impacted by changes in engagement. High-performing organizations use technology to track engagement data alongside their other business metrics—that's when engagement data becomes predictive, answering questions like: How does engagement

actually impact customer satisfaction? What drives improved sales performance at the end of the quarter? How many people are likely to leave in the next six months and what's the likely recruiting and onboarding cost to replace them? And, most importantly, what's the value of measuring and improving employee engagement in the first place?

Employee engagement is much more than a report card. HR executives recognize this, and now they have the ability to prove it with hard data—people data, that is.

Employee engagement is much more than a report card.



Case Study:

Breaking the Habit: Pulling the Right Levers at Opower

Opower is a global software company that's transforming the way people consume utilities information and make decisions about their energy usage. The company recognized a growing retention challenge and looked to its quarterly engagement data for the guidance to solve it.

A linkage analysis identified the top five drivers that influence both employee engagement and retention at the organization. By synthesizing these drivers and their organization-level scores, the Opower people team was able to pinpoint the top three priorities to focus on in order to reduce retention: Growth, Culture, and Leadership. Using insights from employee comments and conversations, the people team was able to build a strategy to battle increasing attrition, centered on these three most impactful drivers of retention.

Just one quarter after implementing its action plan, Opower had already seen a reduction in regrettable attrition, in addition to improved engagement scores, proving that identifying and pulling the right levers has a significant impact on business outcomes.



We live in a new world.

Employees have more options than ever—and they’re exercising their abilities to choose their ideal workplace. The way we connect with and collaborate with each other has dramatically changed in the past decade. But most organizations are still falling victim to bad habits that are keeping them from realizing their potential.

High-performing organizations recognize the impact that retaining and inspiring top talent has on business performance. Understanding what motivates employees, sharing that data with the right stakeholders (including managers and employees), and using it strategically within the context of the business’s goals, has brought these organizations to a higher level of effectiveness that will carry them into the future.

The changes these organizations have made aren’t new or untested ideas. These seven future-ready habits of employee engagement are concepts already being applied in other aspects of our world, and they’ve revolutionized the way we communicate, collaborate, and execute in both our professional and our personal lives. They’ve made us more effective and efficient decision-makers. The sooner you adopt these employee engagement habits, the sooner you’ll be on your way to impacting the business with more integrated, collaborative, and effective investments in your people.

Glint Is An Innovative Tool That Creates Thriving Organizations

Glint is built for high-performing organizations that want to rewrite their future by measuring and improving employee engagement and making engagement data an integral component of the organization's success. Organizations that use Glint automatically follow the new habits of employee engagement by equipping HR, leaders, and managers with:

1. Frequent measurement of employee engagement—monthly, quarterly, or on your schedule.
2. Deep-dive analytics and trends over time, so you can uncover otherwise hidden causes of engagement challenges.
3. Smart Alerts and Insights to surface retention, performance, and development risks, making use of dozens of data points to see business-impacting challenges before they come to a head.
4. Responses grouped by any employee demographic you track, such as team, location, gender, pay band, performance rating, generation, and more. As you slice and dice the data, you will be able to reveal each group's unique engagement DNA. Then you can prioritize action plans.
5. Team-specific dashboards for managers and leaders, which roll up automatically based on hierarchy and generate recommended focus areas and team-specific action plans. This instant access empowers managers to truly own their teams' engagement.
6. Unlimited visualization reports and report sharing, so you can communicate results quickly by sharing reports with the HR team, HRBPs, managers, executives, and team leaders.
7. The ability to integrate the employee lifecycle and business metrics with employee engagement data, illuminating the link between engagement and business outcomes, and providing more sophisticated diagnostics and recommendations.

Why shouldn't you have software to keep a pulse on employee engagement?

Request a demo of Glint. www.glintinc.com