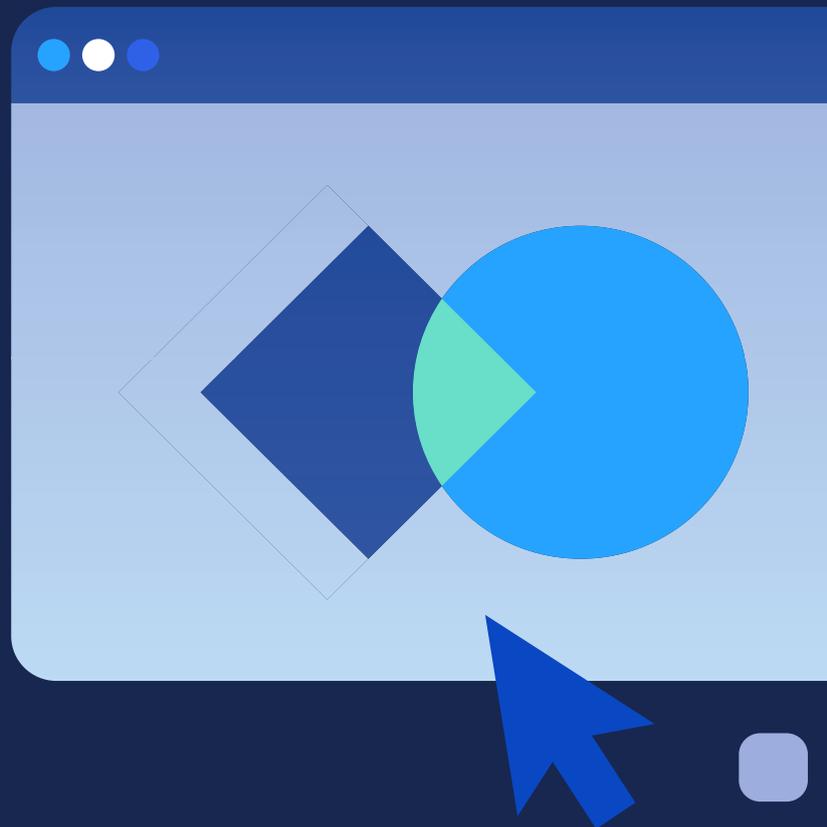




Engagement

An outdated concept?
A major asset to be preserved?

Studies - Advice - Testimonials



EDITORIAL

What exactly is work engagement?

Almost everyone agrees that **engagement is important**, that companies need their teams to be engaged and that performance often depends on more than each person's individual contributions.

Talk about engagement nowadays is not always clear, however, and potential drivers for generating it are not always widely shared. This is first and foremost due to **la lack of consensus surrounding the precise definition of the word itself**.

When we talk about engagement, are we talking about behavioural engagement or organisational engagement? With respect to the task or the relationship? Is it a question of context or of intrinsic motivation, autonomy, trust, investment, connections, authority, attachment, etc?

The aim of this White Paper is to try and **clarify this key management topic**.

As usual, we have interviewed consultants, experts and professionals, analysed figures and collated various testimonials to **provide you with an overview of the question as it currently stands**, as well as offer some possible answers.

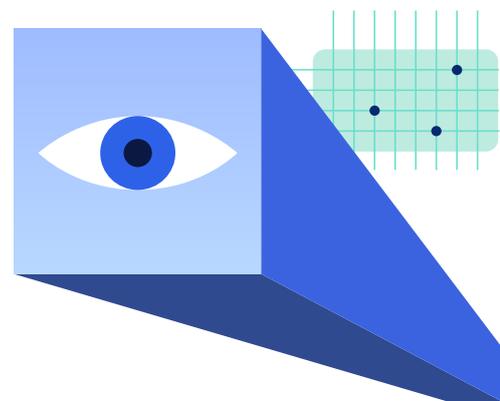
Because we believe in the importance of engagement and of well-defined concepts.

Enjoy the read!

Kind regards



Dominique DUQUESNOY
CEO,
PerformanSe



CONTENTS

01. Introduction

Is it still possible to talk of engagement in today's world? P°5

02. Analysis

Lack of engagement, quiet quitting, acting your wage, etc. Inevitable, new habits... or a lack of meaning at work? P°9

03. Regards perspectives

- **Engagement? A major economic concern for organisations! P°14**
Christian Vandenberghe, HEC Montréal
- **Engagement? A subtle driver of behaviour... P°17**
Daniel Priolo, Université Paul Valéry
- **Engagement: A key performance variable. P°19**
Francesca Murdocco, PerformanSe
- **Challenging the notion of engagement P°23**
Emmanuelle Joseph-Dailly, Julhiet Sterwen

04. Professional testimonials

- **1. Offering a high quality employee experience. P26**
David Gautron, Julhiet Sterwen
- **Taking care of teams, cultivating engagement and enhancing performance. P29**
Marc-Henri Bernard, Remy Cointreau
- **Let's all push back boundaries, innovate and be agents for change. P31**
Cécile Vallienne, La Banque Postale
- **Choose loyalty! P33**
Kevin Bourgeois, Supermood

05. Summary

12 effective ways to create engagement! P°36

06. Conclusion

Engagement requires more bonds, more feelings and more meaning! P°39

*«A working relationship with no **engagement**, no bonds and no commitment is nothing other than reciprocal utilitarianism.»*

Dominique Duquesnoy,
CEO PerformanSe

Introduction

Is it still possible to talk of engagement in today's world?

01.

Is it still possible to talk of engagement in today's world?

The notion of employee engagement in organisations today raises a lot of questions. What does it mean in a world striving to be open, hybrid and flexible? What is it we are really talking about? Is engagement still necessary? Possible? Desirable? Accessible? Do we need ways of obtaining it? If so, how?

Is it an "outdated" term?

Etymologically, the word "engagement" refers to the idea of a pledge or *mise en gage*. Historically, the French *s'engager* meant joining the army, i.e. sacrificing one's freedom for the benefit of the organisation. It is therefore a very strong word, expressing the idea of a long period of confinement, clearly no longer relevant.

In an open world that values fluidity, liberty and flexibility, engagement may seem like a concept with little or no future. If the contemporary ideal really is of a "liquid life", to take the expression of the sociologist Zygmunt Baumann, why continue to think of work in terms of excelling oneself or achieving a deep sense of belonging? Is engagement therefore an outdated concept?

A disputed concept...

Another problem lies in the fact that the word itself can mean very different things to different people. In the following pages, therefore, our experts share their thoughts on the definition of the concept. According to the authors, engagement can mean:

- Engagement with respect to a task, the ability to dedicate oneself fully to one's work, a positive psychological state (see Francesca Murdocco, page 19),
- Behavioural engagement, the ability to maintain a

target behaviour according to a largely contextual process (see Daniel Priolo, page 17),

- Organisational engagement, the ability to develop a strong psychological connection to the organisation (see Christian Vandenberghe, page 14).

Any discussion of engagement therefore requires agreement on a suitable definition.

A hot topic!

Despite this, there is a lot of talk about engagement within organisations. Perhaps because it remains a key factor in collective effectiveness? Or, on the contrary, because it is no longer a given?

We therefore asked HR professionals working for our clients, as well as partners from the Julhiet Sterwen group, to sum up in a few words their vision of engagement. **We asked them all the same question: "Why, in your opinion, is there so much talk of engagement in organisations today?"**. The responses reflect the concept itself: open, invested, different and formulated with conviction, or not as the case may be.

Between investment and scepticism, doubt and optimism, engagement clearly remains a very relevant topic. For many it is essential and must be preserved in order to maintain a sense of collective spirit and effectiveness.

But what about you? What do you think?

Comparative viewpoints

Why is there so much talk of engagement in organisations today?

*"Perhaps because there is more disengagement than before... and this is a concern for managers! Employees today need to fully **adhere to the values and purpose of the company** (which must be meaningful for them) in order to be motivated in their job. In order to **adhere and engage**, moreover, they above all need to feel that these values are embodied at every level of management and that their work is properly appreciated. Without this there is disengagement."*

Magalie Simounet – RTE

*"Because is it a crucial issue for them. In a world where everything is changing quicker and quicker, developing employee engagement is a key factor. The question is knowing **what can be done and what employees need in order to feel engaged**: meaning? trust? autonomy? being listened to? coherence or simply recognition? Changes in perceptions and in our relationship to work means there is no straightforward answer and responses will surely have to be tailored to employees' engagement criteria.*

That said, developing these drivers is vital for strengthening employees' links to the company and develop their sense of engagement for the benefit of a unique culture, their personal fulfilment and, of course, performance."

Emmanuel Trotin – BPCE

*"Because of the combined effect of a **loss of meaning** in work and the speed of changes taking place. Employees understand less well what is happening and have the impression of being treated a little bit worse than before."*

Luc Tardieu – Julhiet Sterwen

*"Because no sustainable development is possible without employee buy-in to a shared vision, convinced of its usefulness, **fully aware of their individual and collective roles** in the project's success and resolutely motivated to fulfil this role and meet the challenge head on with a sense of pride."*

Marc Sabatier – Julhiet Sterwen

*"Because organisations need to **create lasting relationships with their employees** and because the idea of engagement is appealing. For the employee, it implies interesting activities and making use of their skills and strengths."*

Laure Livrozet – Orange

*"Because hybridisation has changed everything. Perhaps we should replace the **notion of engagement** with that of trust."*

Julien Lever – Julhiet Sterwen

"Because it is the current hot topic: first there was the era of progress, then that of innovation and now it is all about engagement.

The goal is to ensure **a balance between the expectations of employees and those of the company.**"

Eric Muther, BPCE

"Because with the new ways of working (working from home, remote working, etc.), the sacred idea of presenteeism, often synonymous with engagement, has been challenged. **How to measure engagement?** Perhaps organisations should focus less on individual engagement and more on collective engagement, allowing time for sharing, support and collective intelligence, promoting trust, empowering people and delegating responsibility."

Dominique Sudre-Montoya – RTE

"**Because employees' motivation is evolving**, as is their representation of work, and more attention is required to **make work meaningful** and to promote individual and collective achievements, empowerment, etc. This will give individuals and teams a sense of belonging to the organisation and enable them to realise their potential."

Caroline Comte – Pôle Emploi

"It is the result of **a relationship built on trust** and 'quality of life at work' driven by the employer."

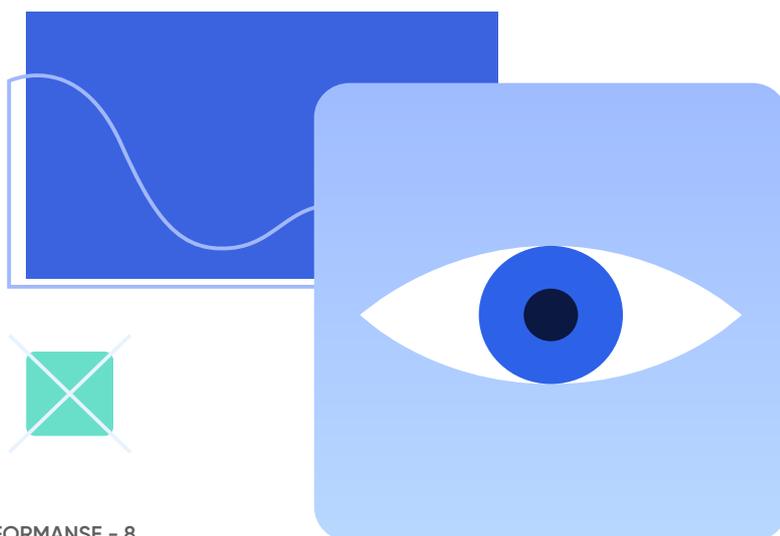
Thierry Bouillon – Pôle Emploi

"**Engagement is key** to making employees aware of their usefulness and of their impact on the collective performance of THEIR company. The term engagement symbolises the significant changes currently taking place in management, the first since the Taylorisation of work."

Gaël de Cagny – Médiamétrie

"Because organisations have finally understood that **engagement guarantees performance.**"

Marc-Henri Bernard – Rémi Cointreau



Analysis

Engagement : An outdated concept? A major asset to be preserved?

Lack of engagement, quiet quitting, acting your wage, etc. Inevitable, new habits... or a lack of meaning at work?

02.

Lack of engagement... inevitable, new habits... or lack of maning at work?

According to the annual Gallop State of the Global Workplace 2022 Report, fewer and fewer employees are engaged in their work. This is apparently a global trend but is particularly true in Europe, the least engaged continent in the world according to the report. Obviously, the pandemic did not help matters, but the phenomenon was in fact already underway.

Employees' lack of engagement has a direct impact on companies. While the consequences for some are linked primarily to well-being and health, others can also suffer from a lack of productivity, problems retaining teams, etc.

Quiet quitting and disengagement: the result of transactional contracts?

The term "quiet quitting" is creating a bit of a buzz on the social networks. It is primarily associated with the younger generations, who were heavily impacted by the pandemic, which significantly disrupted their studies and their entry into the job market.

Defined as the increasing tendency to limit one's work strictly to the tasks and responsibilities set out in the employment contract, it is now also associated with the expression "acting your wage". This means doing only what you are paid to do and nothing else. Nothing else whatsoever.

The quitting - whether silent or otherwise - is therefore psychological. It implies a limited appetite for engagement, the intention to do as little as possible and mistrust of organisations, their

claims and their contracts.

For those familiar with PerformanSe's ECHO₂ psychometric test and its Desired Psychological Contract measurement, however, this trend points to a **"transactional" psychological contract**. An individual in a transactional psychological contract above all needs a precise framework, well defined tasks and responsibilities decided in advance. The working relationship must first and foremost be structured by transactions; not only economic transactions but also effective acknowledgement of a task well done, for example.



Quiet quitting: cause or consequence of a lack of engagement?

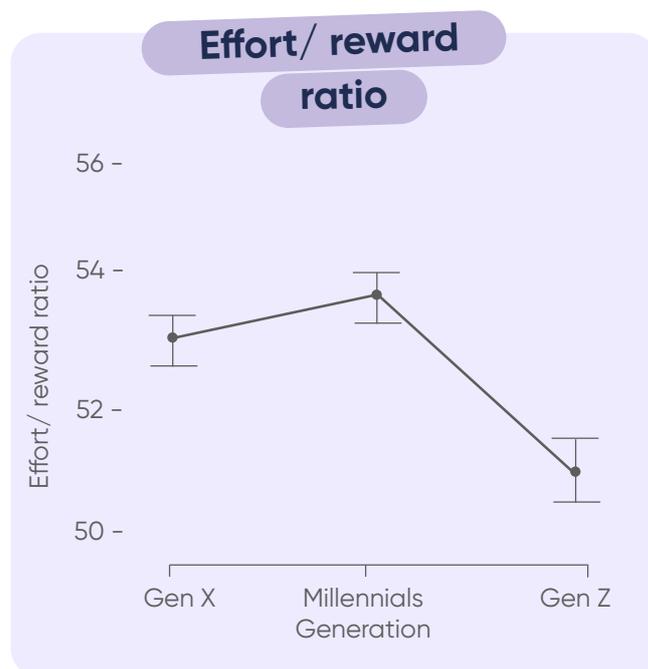
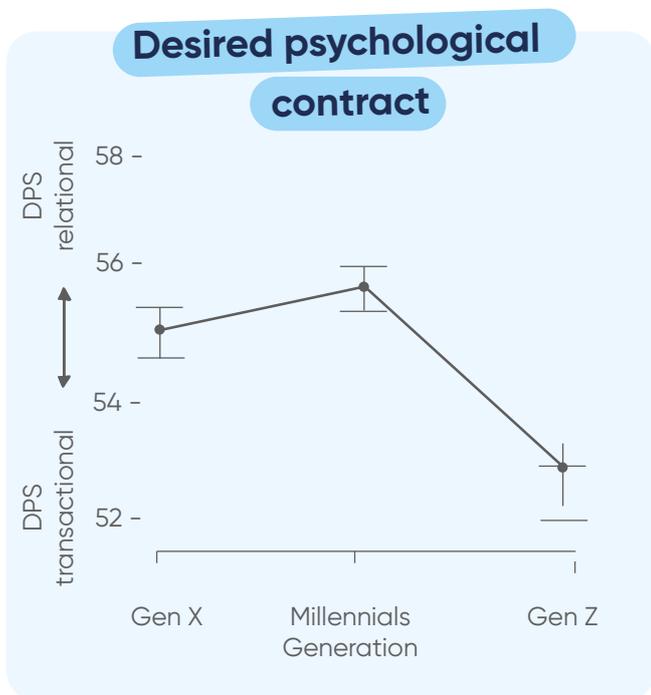
Is quiet quitting the result of a lack of engagement or rather its direct cause? We lack the scientific data to answer this question - the subject remains fairly recent - but the R&D carried out by PerformanSe provides some indications. By studying the responses to tests we have developed and questioning recruiters and clients, we are trying to better understand the phenomenon.

In particular, at this stage we are trying to measure whether there are any generational differences among the various types of desired psychological contract. In 2022, therefore, we conducted a study of 7,836 French-speaking employees who had taken the ECHO₂ test. At the same time, we asked a group of recruiters if they had observed and differences between generations concerning the desired psychological contracts.

The study clearly showed that Generation Z tends to be in a transactional psychological contract (see graph on the left), as opposed to previous generations.

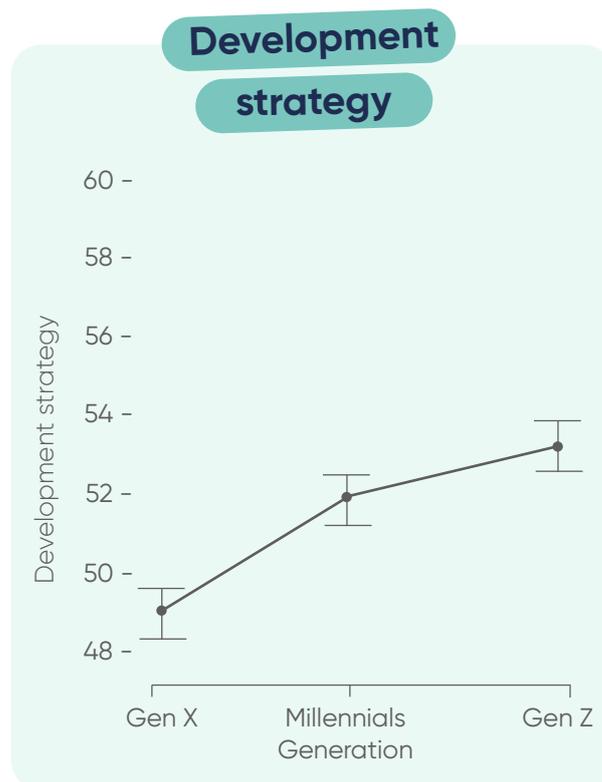
Certain recruiters have considered the reasons for this and blame the effects of disappointment. If someone has made an effort and not been rewarded, they will take a more cautious approach and limit themselves to doing the strict minimum. The younger generations, perhaps more aware of their added value for the company, are particularly wary of being taken advantage of and are hence more anxious to ensure that their contractual relationship is truly balanced.

Our study also revealed a tendency among the young not to want to make any effort outside of the signed framework, confirming a lesser appetite for engagement at work. This observation is more nuanced for some. One recruiter we questioned told us: "They enjoy hard work, but only if they know why they are doing it." "They are driven by meaning, not the work itself." Young people therefore need the work to be meaningful in order to feel invested and engaged.



Meaning and strategy, or the new rules of engagement?

The last telling finding of this study is that younger generations are clearly also more inclined to seek a working relationship in which they can **benefit from ongoing training, maintain their employability and thus develop a more strategic view of their career.** In other words, younger generations want greater control over their careers than previous generations, rather than simply going along with what their employers have to offer. In a world in which former promises of job security have been largely discredited, the younger generations – more mistrustful and distanced – want control over their engagement.



In short

Quiet quitting consists of a psychological disconnection and a breaking of the bond between employees and the organisation. Quiet quitting is therefore directly linked to disengagement.

Quiet quitting currently affects the younger generations in particular. They are less inclined than previous generations to exceed the frameworks set out in their employment contracts for the benefit of their employer.

Their disengagement does not, however, appear to be inevitable. S'ils trouvent du sens dans ce qu'ils font, s'ils estiment que leur travail participe effectivement à leur développement, les jeunes salariés sont toujours à même de dépasser leur défiance.

Expert perspectives

03.

Engagement?

A major economic concern for organisations!



Christian Vandenberghe is a professor at HEC Montréal, where he runs a research chair dedicated to the link between engagement and performance at work. He and his team have therefore been working on the subject of engagement in organisations for 25 years.

By video from Montréal, we asked him for his analysis of the economic importance of engagement and how we can foster it day-to-day.

Engagement is an open concept and can mean different things to different people. How would you define engagement?

For me, engagement corresponds to an **individual's strong psychological link to their organisation**. Engagement therefore has three possible dimensions:

- Engagement can consist of an **emotional bond** or attachment to the organisation. The organisation's values also become the employee's values.
- Engagement can also express a **moral bond**, a sense of duty and obligation towards the employer. This is the case in particular for older generations. We used to enter into a company with a view to enjoying a long and secure career within it.
- Engagement can also be **calculated bond** based on logical, economic considerations depending on one's position, pay and associated benefits. In other words, I know I am on to a good thing and I intend to stay !

Clearly the **emotional bond**, is the strongest and most important and the one that has the greatest impact on performance at work.

Why is engagement essential for organisations? Surely the quality of the work carried out can be independent from the employee's bond or ties to the company?

For two main reasons. The first, which all the studies have shown, is that there is a **direct correlation between engagement and productivity**. The more engaged an employee is, the more they are able to work over and above the basic requirements of their contract and generate extra "discretionary" performance. The second reason concerns the **link between engagement and loyalty to the organisation**. The more engaged an employee is the longer they stay. Staff turnover is very costly for companies: hiring and training costs, lower quality during transition periods, etc. Not to mention the extra workload for those who stay, a potential factor in psychosocial risks, leading to widespread disengagement for everyone.

Given the physical distances linked to the pandemic, the generalisation of working from home, the desire for a better work-life balance and the decline in the value of work, the current period is not very conducive to emotional engagement, wouldn't you say?

This is true. It is also why it is even more important to take it seriously! What was more or less taken for granted thirty or forty years ago, in more stable times, now poses **a real challenge**. In fact, organisations that fail to rise to this challenge are in trouble. Here today in Canada, turnover can reach 30, 40 or 60% of the workforce, jeopardising the very future of the organisations concerned.

"For me, engagement corresponds to an individual's strong psychological link to their organisation."

So how can we strengthen people's emotional ties to the organisation despite everything?

Fortunately, various drivers are still possible!

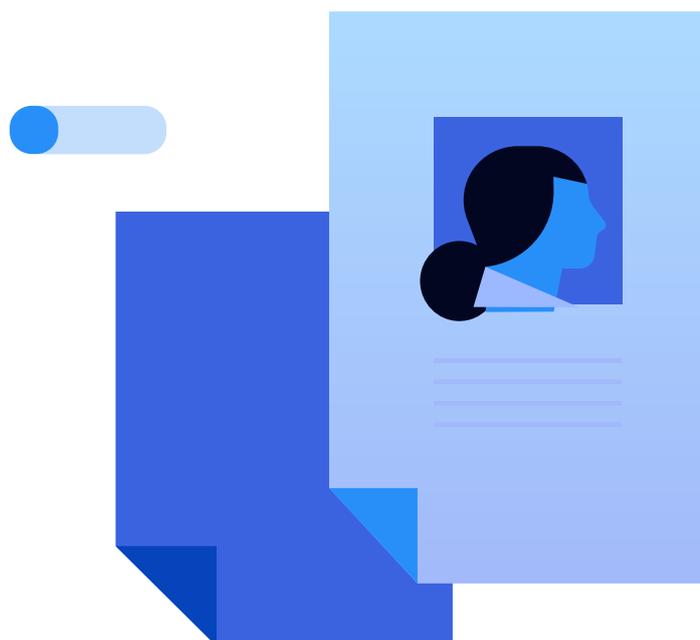
- The first are linked to the organisation. Its ability to **give employees real support** through proactive, disinterested actions. Plus its ability to **ensure the transparency**, clarity, fairness and societal value of its decisions. The more utilitarian the organisation is perceived as being, acting based on its own vested interests, the less able it will be to forge an enduring culture of engagement.
- Both are linked to **management based on proximity**. The more **participatory, open** and able to unite teams in a flexible manner it is, the stronger the emotional bond will be, especially in younger generations who are very sensitive to direct relationships. In fact, we find that contrary to previous generations, young people engage

less with the organisation itself and more with the individuals with whom they have a close working relationship.

- Finally, the third concerns the work itself: **the diversity of tasks, the level of autonomy** and the quality of feedback all contribute to engagement, as does being in direct contact with customers and knowing exactly what the other teams are doing and how each person is contributing to the common goal. The more people can clearly see why they are doing what they are doing, the easier it is for them to be engaged in their actions.

Do you have any concrete examples of positive results?

Here, near Montréal, we have the example of an SME employing around 200 people with very low turnover, way below standard market levels. Why? Because it trusts its employees. It offers each individual great flexibility in how they organise their working hours, including in terms of managing vacations, which is particularly innovative here in Canada, where paid leave is rather rare, as it is across the whole of North America. **Trust can therefore clearly constitute a major driver for fostering engagement.**



*«The more people can clearly **see** why they are doing what they are doing, the easier it is for them to be **engaged** in their actions.»*

Christian Vandenberghe,
Professor at HEC Montréal

Engagement?

A subtle driver of behaviour...



Daniel Priolo is a Doctor of Social Psychology and a Lecturer at Université Paul Valéry – Montpellier 3. As such, his research covers engagement but from a different angle than that of Christian Vandenberghe. He specialises in behavioural, not organisational, engagement and explains how we can create real engagement based on a target behaviour.

In social psychology, the word “engagement” has a different meaning from the one we are familiar with in business. As such, how would you define behavioural engagement?

For me, engagement is a process rather than a feeling, for example. It can be defined as a **sociocognitive process creating a situational bond to a “cause”**, whether individual or societal, that can take the form of behaviour to protect the environment, to give up smoking or to adopt positive behaviour in terms of safety at work, for example, subjects I am very familiar with. The ability to engage will above all depend on the context and, to a lesser extent, on personal characteristics.

Why does engagement guarantee behavioural effectiveness?

Engagement reflects an internalisation of the behaviour in question. Someone who is engaged will be able to maintain the behaviour over time, without the need for reminders, sanctions or incentives. If they are obeying an order, on the

other hand, force or reward will be necessary. Engagement is vital for maintaining this pressure on a long-term basis, requiring no additional effort.

“Engagement first requires adherence to the cause.”

Is engagement more effective than authority?

In the short term, authority can be a very effective driver of behaviour. In an organisation, giving someone an order to do something remains a simple and sure-fire way of getting things done. **In the medium term, however, with no internalisation of the behaviour in question, it risks being less effective.** A good example is the COVID 19 vaccine in France. Forcing people to have it (vaccine pass, access restrictions, etc.) created results, but not engagement! The end result was fairly high vaccination levels in the short term but no long-term vaccination model. Once the obligation was lifted, vaccination rates fell, despite the virus continuing to circulate.

So how can we create engagement based on a desired behaviour in practice?

First of all, creating engagement means giving the other person the choice to engage or not! Without a "prior declaration of liberty" there can be no engagement. Engagement cannot take place through force. Next, the **act of engagement** should ideally be **made public** and the organisation should ensure that the desired behaviour can be repeated regularly, in practice, in an irrevocable and unambiguous manner. Finally, the organisation must accept the consequences that the decision entails. **There can be no engagement without awareness of the stakes and of the price to be paid.**

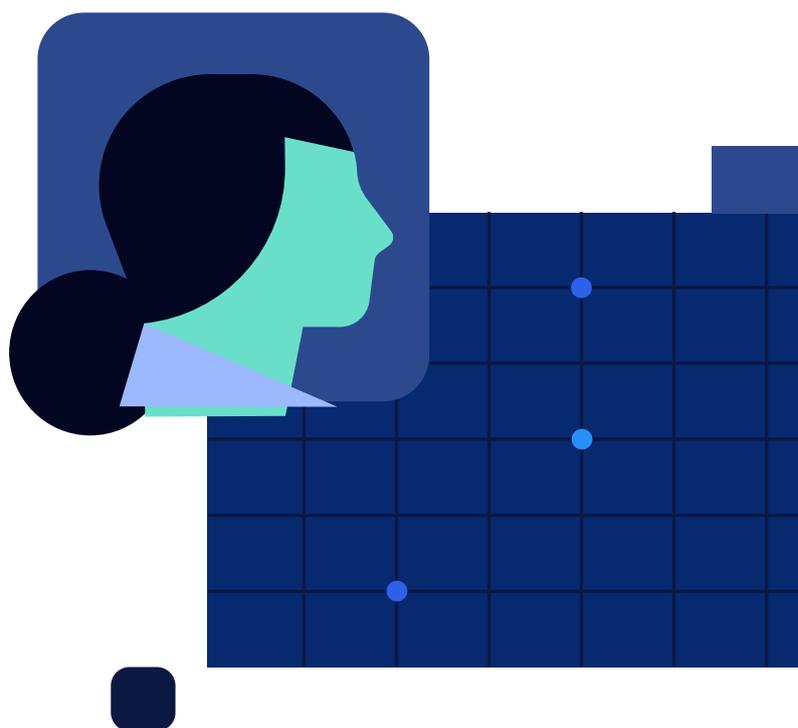
... A bit like in a marriage?

Exactly! In fact, that is an example we often use. In a marriage, behavioural engagement goes hand-in-hand with freedom of choice, a public engagement (the bans, the ceremony, the witnesses, etc.), an understanding of the stakes and real cost for each participant. In return, one hopes the married couple will benefit from long and prosperous cooperation.

"Creating engagement means giving the other person the choice to engage or not! Without a prior declaration of liberty there can be no engagement."

What are the necessary conditions for real engagement?

Engagement first requires **prior adherence** to the "cause". This will be easier to obtain if the behaviour in question is really socially desirable and subject to consensus within the group. It also, however, requires a certain quality of context, with regard to labour relations, for example. In a climate of tension or crisis, or faced with a contested form of behaviour, engagement is undoubtedly not the best solution. **The more fluid and consensual the environment, the easier it will be for people to engage.**



Engagement: a key performance variable. To be leveraged without moderation?



Francesca Murdocco is a research engineer in the PerformanSe R&D teams. She is also pursuing a PhD in work psychology and writing a thesis on psychological resources and work engagement.

Naturally, we asked her to tell us about engagement: how we define it, how we measure it and the factors that can explain and reinforce it.

How can we define engagement from a scientific point of view?

We often define engagement as a positive psychological state with three dimensions:

- A dimension of **"vigour"** , or energy, i.e. the ability to actually perform the proposed tasks,
- A dimension of **"devotion"** to the task or the desire to do it, i.e. the belief that what we are doing it useful and meaningful,
- A dimension of **"absorption"**, meaning the ability to be absorbed in our work and fully devote ourselves to it, without any distractions or resistance.

When these three dimensions are present, we can start to talk about work engagement.

How can we measure employee engagement at a given point in time?

Quite easily. Special questionnaires exist that are easy to manage and make it possible to situate each person's level of engagement on a specific scale.

Measuring has the advantage of objectifying the

situation, enabling comparisons and highlighting discrepancies, as well as excesses. An insufficiently engaged employee will be vulnerable to bore-out or quiet quitting, as we say today, while someone who is excessively engaged will be vulnerable to workaholism or burn-out. **Engagement is also a question of balance !**

"Engagement is therefore an important variable but one that is highly subject to fluctuations and that can easily deteriorate or improve according to the context and its quality."

So how can we measure an employee's potential capacity for engagement?

At PerformanSe, we have developed in our ECHO₂ psychometric test a Desired Psychological Contract measurement, providing a snapshot of individuals' expectations of work at a given time. Is the person only concerned with the task to be

carried out here and now (transactional profile) Is assimilate its values and culture (interpersonal profile)? Interpersonal profiles are always more likely to go the extra mile and do a bit more than what is requested of them. Transactional profiles will always be more cautious and measured, either by conviction or as a defence mechanism. In fact, some transactional profiles are actually disillusioned interpersonal profiles.

“An insufficiently engaged employee will be vulnerable to bore-out or quiet quitting, as we say today.”

What facilitates engagement?

Actually, engagement is not that hard to create. The drivers of engagement are well known and simple to activate. Examples include:

- giving teams the **autonomy** and freedom to organise how they complete their tasks, without unnecessary supervision or micro-management,
- providing **support** or even coaching, where necessary,
- offering positive **feedback** and clearly acknowledging the quality of the work carried out,
- offering **training** and the possibility for each person to learn and develop their skills,
- and, of course, ensuring **alignment** between the organisation's values and the individual's desired psychological contract.

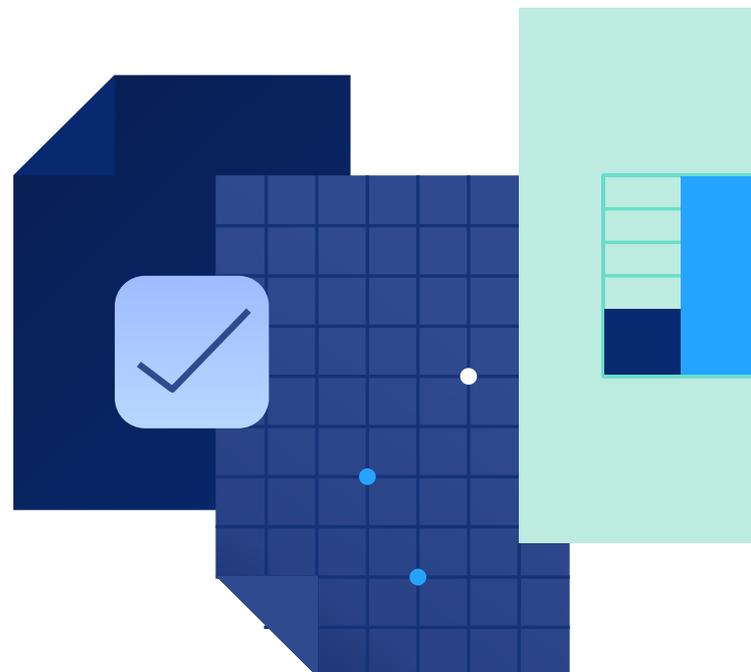
By taking into consideration the prior expectations of the individual at the recruitment stage and by ensuring supportive management, we can foster engagement. Independently of more sensitive questions that are harder to address, such as the profound meaning of the company's purpose and pay, etc.

“Engagement can evolve very quickly, independently from job satisfaction. This is because we can be satisfied with our working conditions without feeling engaged.”

What are the benefits for the company of trying to strengthen the engagement of its teams?

It's obvious! For two complementary reasons:

- Because, as all the studies show, **engagement is a contributing factor to individual and therefore collective performance.**
- Also, because **engagement can evolve very quickly**, independently from job satisfaction. This is because we can be satisfied with our working conditions without feeling engaged. Engagement is therefore an important variable but one that is highly subject to fluctuations and that can easily deteriorate or improve according to the context and its quality.



In conclusion, if you had one piece of advice for HR teams, what would it be?

For me, it is really important to measure employee engagement. Not only to retain talent by preventing burn-out, for example, but also to identify concrete drivers of optimisation. There are many potential benefits of monitoring and fostering engagement for an organisation.



Focus on the DPC

PerformanSe has included a Desired Psychological Contract measurement in its ECHO[®] assessment tool. This offers recruiters, managers and talent managers the possibility of better understanding individuals' job expectations and, in particular, the ability to distinguish between transactional and interpersonal profiles.

Key points to remember

- **The Desired Psychological Contract** reflects an individual's motivation at a given point in time and is independent from their skills and the quality of their work, as well as from the ultimate satisfaction they feel in performing their job.
- **Interpersonal profiles** will simply be more sensitive and receptive to the organisation's demands and therefore more vulnerable to burn-out.
- **Transactional profiles** are more factual and harder to engage, and are better protected against excessive pressure and workload.
- **Transactional profiles** are often found among freelancers and temp workers, as well as in the civil service and in expertise roles. Interpersonal profiles are more likely to be found in roles requiring a lot of team work, both in industry and in the service sector.

«**Engagement** is therefore an important variable but one that is highly subject to fluctuations and that can easily deteriorate or improve according to the **context** and its quality.»

Francesca Murdocco
Research Engineer in the
PerformanSe R&D teams.

...And if we questioned the notion of commitment?



Emmanuelle Joseph-Dailly, a consultant at Julhiet Sterwen as well as an author and public speaker, has published a number of pieces on the theme of engagement, including a book entitled "Développez l'engagement de vos collaborateurs" (Eyrolles 2018, with Didier Noyé) and several articles in the Harvard Business Review France.

We interviewed her and asked her to give us a critical analysis of the very concept of engagement, which in her opinion is often based on outdated models.

Is the very concept of engagement outdated in your opinion?

Engagement is an old concept with etymological roots in the idea of a "pledge" (from the French *mise en gage*). The term then evolved in military vocabulary to mean engagement in combat. To engage oneself therefore meant entering into a confined space, to be restricted, or bound. People have changed, however, and want more freedom, greater flexibility and above all more time for themselves. In this context, the idea of a sort of long-term exclusive confinement seems very outdated. The same applies to the idea of working excessively, over and above the norm and beyond one's simple contractual obligations, an idea that forms the basis of certain HR definitions of engagement. We need to rethink some aspects of the concept of engagement and make it more open and flexible and more in line with new expectations.

So if we can't talk about engagement, what should we be talking about in your opinion?

Personally, I prefer the term investment. Do I want to put myself in a position that binds and confines me? No, certainly not.

Can I invest myself in my work? Yes, of course. Bearing in mind, however, **that there can be no investment without a sense of fairness and organisational justice**. If I invest myself, will I be paid, valued and recognised accordingly? Discussions about engagement sometimes seem to ignore the question of consideration, which is, however, essential.

"We need to rethink some aspects of the concept of engagement and make it more open and flexible and more in line with new expectations."

So how can we foster employee investment? Surely companies need results and results must imply some sort of presence and conviction, whatever name we choose to give it?

Yes, of course. But **the solutions must be** employees respond to the same drivers. This probably requires a **more flexible framework for salaried workers** and regularly **adjustment** carried out in a bilateral manner, with input from the employees themselves, as they are directly concerned. The employment contract that an employee signed 3, 5, 7 or 10 years ago and that the company may have repeatedly amended, usually unilaterally, is generally not what really engages them anymore. Since signing this contract, the employee may have changed manager, professional address, role, team and organisation. Did anyone ask them if they agreed and if their contract still seems balanced to them? Usually not. So how can we ask them to invest themselves on a long-term basis if they were not consulted about the changes to their employment contract?

"We need to recreate quality group time, positive emulation and opportunities for meaningful encounters and exchanges."

If you had one piece of advice for HR teams, what would it be?

I would suggest they **redesign their work spaces**. In this new and hybrid world, what are we now doing and where? How can we make employees want to come to work? If we turn new "flex office" open spaces simply into co-working spaces where everyone perches wherever they want with their laptop and headset, employee investment will whittle away to nothing. We need to recreate quality group time, positive emulation and opportunities for meaningful encounters and exchanges. **We can't simply make savings by reducing the available space, we also need to reinvest in motivating the team.**



Testimonials

04.

Offering a high quality employee experience.

Every day, Everywhere.



David Gautron,
Partner Julhiet Sterwen

What if the employee experience provided the real key to engagement? David Gautron, Managing Partner at Julhiet Sterwen and leader of the “Phygital Employee Experience” expertise community, believes it is.

In order to better understand the new practical challenges of engagement, we asked him to share with us his thoughts on the subject.

How, in your opinion, should we approach the question of engagement in companies today?

Engagement forms part of a new kind of “contract of trust” between the employee and employer. **The question of autonomy is now key** and the idea of engagement has a new basis, centred on the idea of “missions” rather than fixed responsibilities, **in a framework of engagement that is no longer necessarily exclusive or considered long term.** Everything is thus more open and flexible; nothing is definitive. One can even leave a company... and then come back!

What are employee expectations in terms of engagement? How do you think they have changed?

The increased autonomy linked to the development of hybrid modes, combining physical presence and remote working, has generated new expectations. In particular, employees expect management to be more open and collaborative, based on the notion of reciprocal manager/collaborator responsibility. They also need greater flexibility, mobility and the ability to work from anywhere, with the right tools and access. Ingredients for a successful life (what the employee is doing today, where and how they can do it and what that represents for them) have become as, if not more, important than ingredients for a successful career (what they will be able to do tomorrow and the evolution of their status, etc.).

So how can we promote employee engagement despite all this in this new, more open and more mobile context?

For me, the answer is simple: by ensuring that people are offered a high-quality employee experience every day, wherever they are. Just as we strive to offer customers a sufficiently rich experience that they want to come back and buy from us again, we must offer our teams a working experience sufficiently satisfying to keep them happy and make them want to continue in the long term. We need to take their needs and expectations into account, whether they are in the office or at home. This raises the question, in particular, of the importance and role of different places of work. Ideally, people shouldn't be doing in the office what they do at home. Work should be organised coherently between different places, modes and tasks. People should also have access to the proper tools all the time, wherever they are.

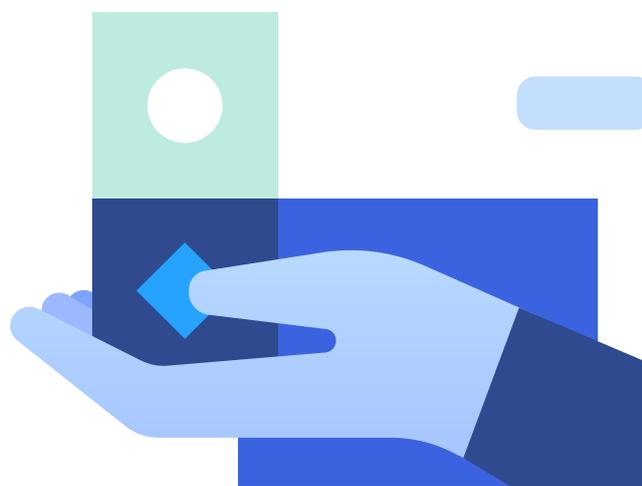
How can we ensure the effective quality of the employee experience?

Through active listening! In order to understand what employees experience on a daily basis, what they are lacking and what "irritates" them. We can use this to improve tools, processes and modes of organisation with them and for them. In my opinion, **a successful and engaging experience means working with employees** to come up with the necessary solutions. The old Command and Control model is clearly outdated; management is increasingly about building things together.

Modern approaches are more participatory, collaborative and empowering, where trust is cultivated at team level to find organisational solutions by and for the team.

If you had one piece of advice for HR teams, what would it be? Put yourself in Pulse/GPS-type systematic listening mode. Think about what you

have been doing up to now for those outside the company and do the same in parallel for those within, with the goal of real job satisfaction among your teams. **There can be no engagement without satisfaction** and there can be no satisfaction if certain basic requirements are not met. Engagement is first and foremost a matter of day-to-day job satisfaction rather than a question of purpose, values or discourse.



Focus on the Barometer Phygital Workplace

56% of managers now consider that working from home reduces their stress level, compared to only 46% in 2021.

This is one of the key findings of the Phygital Workplace Barometer conducted each year by IFOP for Julhiet Sterwen across a sample of around 1,000 employees in companies employing more than 500 people.

The aim? To listen to and share employees' perceptions regarding their company's digital transformation and their experience in a world that is increasingly both physical and digital.

«**Engagement** is first and foremost a matter of day-to-day job **satisfaction** rather than a question of purpose, values or discourse.»

David Gautron, Partner
Julhiet Sterwen

Taking care of teams, cultivating engagement and enhancing performance.



Marc-Henri Bernard
DHR, Remy Cointreau

Marc-Henri Bernard is a seasoned HR professional and has been Director of Human Resources for more than 30 years, as well as being a former professional athlete selected for the French handball team 103 times. Currently Director of Human Resources for the Remy Cointreau group and its 2,000 employees worldwide, he is particularly well placed to talk to us about engagement and its effects on performance.

Do you believe engagement still an important issue in companies today?

Yes! Without any hesitation. There can be no real team performance without individual engagement. Generating performance therefore means creating the conditions to enable each individual to engage and to give the very best of themselves, in a lasting manner.

So how can we create the right conditions for engagement on a day-to-day basis?

By taking care of our teams, creating the right conditions for fulfilment and success and enabling each individual to find their place and make the best possible contribution to the whole. It means

creating a virtuous circle in which each person can find fulfilment and success and therefore perform well. The better people feel are in their role, the more they contribute, the more they are rewarded, the more motivated they are to progress, etc.

How have you developed this at Remy Cointreau?

Actually the first thing I did when I arrived in 2015 was to set up an engagement survey. That's how important we consider the issue. The aim was to give people a voice, create a reference point for future measures and enable us to design an associated action plan. It is important not only to listen but also to value the importance of what is said. It is when people see the concrete results of the listening process that they feel they have really been heard.

"There can be no real team performance without individual engagement"

So what concrete actions have you been able to implement?

Well, to cite just a few, we have extended the medical check-up originally reserved only for members of the Executive Committee to all employees in France (800 people). Each employee can now benefit, free of charge, on a voluntary basis, from a full check-up every two years before the age of 45 and every year thereafter. This is a

very concrete way of taking care of people. Another very different measure has been the creation of a Talent Department, completely independent from the HR Division! This gives it greater freedom with regard to its views and proposals. This team monitors 600 individuals out of the 2,000 employees in the group in total, with the aim of giving each one the maximum chance of progressing in line with their needs and expectations. Finally, the third concrete example is our setting up of a real employee profit-sharing scheme: 77% of employees in France and 50% abroad are now shareholders in Remy Cointreau. This is both a driver and proof of the trust in place in a group which, thanks to its history, its family culture, the terroirs it cultivates and the products it matures, naturally takes the long view of things.

How do you think issues regarding engagement have changed over the past ten years?

First, I think they have changed less than journalists and consultants would have us believe. Young people, for example, have always wanted to progress, enjoy greater autonomy and the ability to grow and take on responsibility. There is nothing new about this! Clearly, though, questions regarding meaning and values have become more important, as has the sharing of value and the redistribution of the fruits of growth. In my opinion, firms that fail to take these aspects into account and are no longer able to foster real Sustainable Development engagement with real employee participation, will struggle to remain attractive. Even if only because they will find it hard to recruit the talent they need.

What did professional sport teach you in terms of engagement?

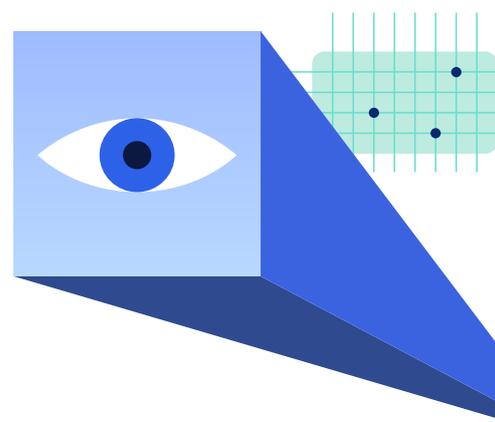
First of all, the importance of the team, of course, particularly in my case, as I played a team sport.

The team is more important than the individuals who compose it because performance always ultimately boils down to team performance. This is also true in a company. Within the team, however, I was also able to experience the importance of complementary skills between different profiles. It is easier to create a competitive team by combining different and complementary talents than by lining up star players with similar and often competing profiles.

If you had one piece of advice to give based on your experience, what would it be?

It would be something a great coach once showed and proved to me; that focusing on someone's real strengths, what they are naturally best at, is very effective. This is what creates both a sense of fulfilment and performance, and therefore engagement. All too often, management tends to criticise, highlighting weaknesses and pointing out people's failings and limits. Let's be positive and try to bring out the best in people. And let's learn to simply accept the rest!

"Generating performance means creating the conditions to enable each individual to engage"



Let's all push back boundaries, innovate and be agents for change.



Cécile Vallienne, HR Transformation Division, La Banque Postale.

Currently at the HR Transformation Division at La Banque Postale, Cécile Vallienne works every day on questions concerning employee experience and support for change.

She has extensive experience in managing changes within the organisation and shares with us her expertise, thoughts reflections.

Do you consider the employee experience to be a major driver in terms of work engagement?

Yes, absolutely. That is why as part of the 2030 strategic plan, the aim of which is to make La Banque Postale "France's favourite bank", we have created **a special scheme dedicated to the employee experience**. In keeping with our commitments to our customers, this scheme is based on three key promises to La Banque Postale employees: the best possible career development for all (integration, training and support), improved quality of life at work and the promotion of civic engagement in favour of a just transition.

So how can we ensure the quality of this employee

experience and therefore of this engagement?

At La Banque Postale, we **regularly measure engagement**. Without a real system in place for listening to people, it is impossible to bring about positive change. This is why we contribute to the La Poste group engagement barometer, which concerns almost 225,000 employees. As part of this tool, around 18,000 La Banque Postale employees are questioned each year in order to measure their pride and sense of belonging, their understanding of strategic choices, their clarity of their career perspectives and whether they would recommend the group as an employer, etc. This enables us to keep our finger on the pulse with regard to the employee experience.

What do you see as the expectations of the younger generations? How have they changed?

Civic values have become very important. La Banque Postale has always embodied these values through its citizen banking and insurance model based on real values of trust, accessibility and proximity. Our employees, particularly the youngest among them, **clearly need these values to be embodied**. They have become very attentive to concrete proof of our distinctive strong commitments.

What do you think is the hardest thing about fostering engagement in today's world?

The hardest part is supporting teams in a **context**

subject to many changes and the hybridisation of work. Change remains a natural breeding ground for resistance. Pride and a sense of belonging are very strong in our group, as is adhesion to our values. The challenge, therefore, above all lies in getting every individual engaged in the demanding and unprecedented transformation processes taking place. Here, however, there is a **great demand for reassurance** about our direction and the collective manner in which we are going to proceed. Employees quite rightfully want to be involved in the changes taking place and express their opinions, in order to better assimilate the course we have set. Similarly, the generalisation of working from home means rethinking our way of working.

Which has consequences in terms of management?

Since Covid, the relationship to work has changed, which poses a challenge to managers and employees in terms of how they work individually and as a team. This is a real challenge for everyone. Through a combination of trust and empowerment,

managers need to create more collaborative and cross-functional working relationships.

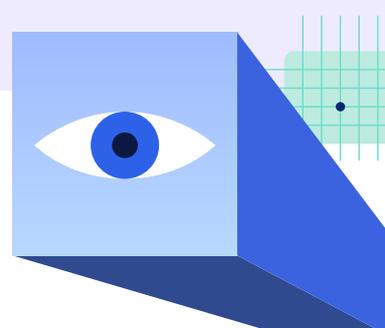
If you had one piece of advice for managers today, what would it be?

Test, experiment and learn! I think it is vital that everyone has the right to try and fail. There is no miracle solution and we are all going to have to work together to design new rules and **learn to look outside conventional frameworks to invent and innovate.**

And for young employees in the group?

Our managers take the opportunity in integration seminars to encourage new arrivals to share their surprise, offer new ideas and dare to take risks. They are right! "Let's all push back boundaries, **innovate and be agents for change.**"

«Employees quite rightfully want to be involved in the changes taking place and express their opinions, in order to better assimilate the course we have set.»



Choose loyalty !



Kevin Bourgeois,
Co-founder of Supermood

There can be no engagement without attention, and no attention without listening. This is the simple idea on which Kevin Bourgeois founded Supermood, a platform dedicated to listening to employees in large organisations.

Based on extensive feedback gathered from a significant portion of the largest companies in France, he gives us his views and analysis of the question of engagement.

How would you define engagement?

Engagement is an open concept and can be used in business in connection with a variety of things like "sustainable motivation», "well-being at work», "fulfilment" and "talent retention". For me it is simple: engagement is the combination of **motivation**, concrete **productivity**, a feeling of **well-being** and a sense of **loyalty**.

What does the data you have collected tell us about employee engagement and its evolution?

Lockdown led to an increase in engagement, in a heightened context of uncertainty and solidarity. As the health situation has returned to normal, engagement has

returned to its previous, rather mediocre, level. This is particularly because for employees, the meaningfulness and impact of what they do and their work-life balance has become even more important and the responses by companies have not necessarily been satisfactory.

"For me it is simple: engagement is the combination of motivation, concrete productivity, a feeling of well-being and a sense of loyalty."

How, in your opinion, can we foster employee engagement?

I would argue in two main ways. The first is based on the necessity of **knowing what is going on internally** by listening to teams directly, without managerial filters, and by taking what they say seriously. There can be no engagement without attention. The second is based on the importance of **claiming very sound, basic values** that everyone can get behind and then adapting and implementing at the local level. If the company decides, for example, to put the customer at the heart of the business – something that is often said but not always true in reality – it is essential for teams on the ground to be able to devise and choose how they are going to proceed in practical terms. There can be no engagement without autonomy.

What are your impressions about loyalty and engagement? What surprises you the most today?

Personally, I am always surprised at the disparity recruitment. This is no logic to it. It is much more economical and effective to generate loyalty in the teams already in place and already trained up than to constantly go fishing for new talent. It is as if the obvious need to retain employees were suffering from a kind of inertia. Recruitment, on the other hand, is something we do know how to do in a planned, centralised and organised fashion. Generating loyalty is more complicated and harder to plan and manage. **Yet talent retention remains a major key to collective effectiveness.**

If you had one piece of advice for HR teams, what would it be?

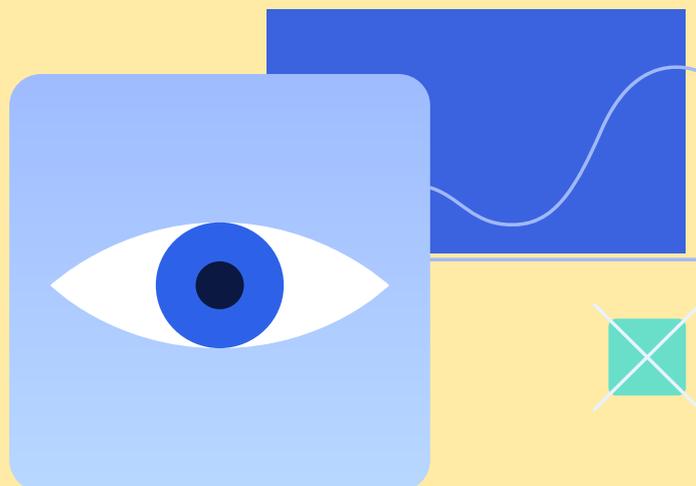
Obviously I'm going to defend my own field, but I really do think it is vital that company directors have an accurate idea of what is going on internally. I see too many management teams acting blindly, without really knowing where they are going, what will have an impact internally or otherwise and whether or not there will be any buy-in from employees. This is not only prevents good management but also creates a significant amount of stress, which could be reduced if they had better internal indicators at their fingertips.

"I am always surprised at the disparity between talk of the need to retain talent and the HR budgets dedicated to the employer brand and recruitment."

Supermood

Founded in 2015, Supermood is a platform dedicated to listening to feedback from employees in large organisations. The company currently has **45 employees and lists almost half of companies listed on the CAC 40 as customers.**

The aim? To transform each individual's feedback, comments and ideas into drivers of innovation and competitiveness, **while improving Quality of Life at Work and team retention.**



*«If engagement is **key to performance** and employee retention, then generating engagement should be **a really major concern.**»*

Dominique Duquesnoy,
Chief Executive Officer
of PerformanSe

Summary

Engagement : An outdated concept? A major asset to be preserved?

12 effective ways to
create engagement!

05.

12 effective ways to create engagement!

The shifting, unstable business environment caused by the current tumultuous societal and political climate, combined with an increasingly global employment market, has underlined the vital importance of promoting a corporate culture that fosters well-being, engagement and performance in its employees (Otaye-Ebede et al, 2020; Petchsawang and Mclean, 2017).

If engagement is key to performance and employee retention, then generating engagement should be a really major concern.

To achieve this, we have summarised and come up with 12 simple and practical ideas, based on 6 areas of reflection and work. They are inspired by all the contributors to this White Paper: experts, HR directors and members of the Julhiet Sterwen group. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them.

#1. At the recruitment stage

Look beyond technical knowledge and experience and choose applicants whose values, codes and expectations are compatible with those of the organisation in terms of environmental factors, the nature of the work, moral decency, opportunities for learning and growing, autonomy, working relationships, usefulness of the work and recognition, etc. This is necessary in order to be able to envisage potential behaviour outside of their role.

- People can form a lasting bond with their organisation if they identify with their working environment and with their employer.

PROJECTION

Ensure a high quality integration process for each new recruit.

- To demonstrate the importance of each employee from the outset and facilitate the forming of long-term attachments

- Representations are quickly formed based on the most visible signs and contribute to employees swiftly forming a positive or negative view of their environment.

WELCOME

#2. Day-to-day

Offer employees autonomy, maximum flexibility and the ability to organise themselves as freely as possible.

- No more authoritarian constraints, the obligation to be present all the time and micromanagement!
- Markers of good leadership are changing and are now increasing based on the ability to delegate major, stimulating tasks (what needs to be done) combined with leniency as regards activities (how it is done).

AUTONOMIE

Ensure a fully satisfying employee experience, both with working remotely and in the workplace

- Because day-to-day job satisfaction remains essential if you want to generate the desire to go above and beyond the basic employment contract! The experience must transcend current fashions and trends and employees' needs must be regularly sought and ascertained.

ATTENTION

#3. In connection with management

Offer close, direct and personalised management

- Working from home cannot and must not mean anonymity, remoteness or indifference.
- Managing activities remotely must not mean doing away with trust, which must be even more strongly expressed by sharing positive information, encouraging collaboration and communication between employees and sharing the vision and planning of tasks

PRESENCE

Give everyone real feedback on their contributions

- In order to acknowledge good performance or otherwise engaging people to do better.

FEEDBACK

#4. From and HR perspective

Strive to offer everyone a just and appropriate place in the organisation, in line with their personal motivations

- Create virtuous circles of trust, fulfilment, success and positive feedback.

ADAPTATION

Offer each employee positive long-term perspectives and the opportunity to develop new skills and knowledge.

EVOLUTION

#5. In an institutional manner

Make each person's work meaningful

- Remind employees of their purpose, explain their contributions and make the job exciting, useful and concrete.

CONCRETE MEANING

Ensure the transparency and fairness of decisions and pay

- Make clear and just decisions and ensure that pay is fair and commensurate with the energy invested.

PROMISES KEPT

#6. Sustainably...

Ensure long-term alignment between the expectations of the individual and those of the company

- Whatever is true on the first day of the employment contract may evolve and break down over time. Regular bilateral updates are essential!

UPDATES

Regularly measure levels of satisfaction and engagement

- To ensure the quality of the bonds in place and – if necessary – put in place the required action plans.

LISTENING

Conclusion

Engagement requires more bonds, more feelings and more meaning!

05.

Engagement requires more bonds, more feelings and more meaning!

Day-to-day job satisfaction is, of course, important, even necessary. It is not enough, however, to fuel the will to act, invest and forge strong, lasting ties, the desire to do more, to do better, with and for others, day in day out. To not be content with simply doing the minimum required in the contract of employment.

This kind of engagement requires a deeper bond, a real attachment, which cannot be forged by means of normal, standard responses (quality of the premises, flexible working-from-home arrangements, the relevance of the tools provided, etc.). Employee experience marketing – just like we have customer experience marketing – will not suffice. Proximity management, even where well-intentioned, will not suffice either, with its limited means.

Without a sturdier basis to one's relationship with the organisation, its purpose and those who inspire and manage it, the "act your wage" mentality will gain the upper hand and everyone will lose out as a result: companies, of course, faced with lower collective effectiveness, but also individuals, caught up in a spiral of demotivation, loss of meaning and lack of interest.

Because, like all relationship games, it takes two to tango. While companies often contribute to collective disengagement by focusing on financial imperatives and the need for flexibility, individuals have a tendency to respond in kind: demands for greater flexibility and freedom, a four-day working week, the desire to work whenever and wherever

they please, etc.

But is this ultimately what we all want? An ultra-flexible world, with no real attachments other than circumstantial connections over the space of a project, a period of time or an assignment? A world of processes and mercenaries, in open flex-office spaces and remote working? Or do we want a living, engaged, shared world based on meaningful projects?

To recreate engagement and therefore also collective effectiveness and sustainability, perhaps it is time to reinvent our relationship to work based on a mix of flexibility and presence. In which the idea of an "authority figure" is no longer frowned on and in which an awareness of the enduring meaning of our work will create real engagement.

A working relationship with no engagement, no bonds and no commitment is nothing other than reciprocal utilitarianism. Engagement is not conditional and can only be expressed through trust.



Dominique DUQUESNOY
Chief Executive Officer,
PerformanSe



PerformanSe is a publisher of tests and expert in psychometrics, specialising in the assessment and development of soft skills.

For more than 35 years, PerformanSe has based its expertise on knowledge of the individual at work, with the conviction that this knowledge is essential to the performance of companies and the satisfaction of those contributing to them.

With a wide range of assessment solutions and advisory services, PerformanSe supports more than 1,500 customers in France and abroad each year in their recruitment, skills and career management and individual and collective development projects

We would like to thank the contributors to this White Paper:

HEC MONTRÉAL

Supermood



julhiet  sterwen



 Performanse
soft skills for good