

# Employee engagement—resource

## What is employee engagement?

The Gallup Organisation (Gallup) first coined the term ‘employee engagement’. It defines employee engagement as: ‘the extent to which an employee is psychologically committed to someone or something in their organisation, how hard they try and how long they stay as a result of their commitment.’

Employee engagement relates to both attitude and behaviour, therefore some of the descriptors below relate to how the person interacts and does their job, and some describe how the person feels about their work and workplace.

## What an engaged employee looks like

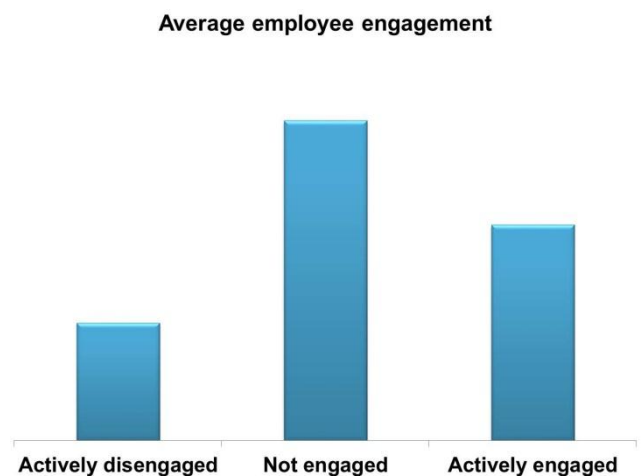
An engaged employee will:

- talk positively to others about the organisation
- enjoy working for the organisation even if they could work elsewhere
- consistently go the extra mile for their co-workers and the organisation
- be concerned about the organisational outcomes and successes
- have a passion about the vision and future of the organisation
- exhibit enthusiasm and energy in their tasks.

In plain terms, engagement is about an employee reaching their full potential at work: ‘Am I fully committed to my role and the organisation?’

## The impact of engagement

Gallup has researched employee engagement for decades and has identified three broad categories of employees:



## 1. Those who are actively disengaged

This group is physically present but psychologically absent. They share their unhappiness in the workplace with others.

## 2. Those who are not engaged

This group may be productive, but they are not psychologically connected to the performance or vision of the organisation. They are more likely to be absent and to be looking elsewhere for another position.

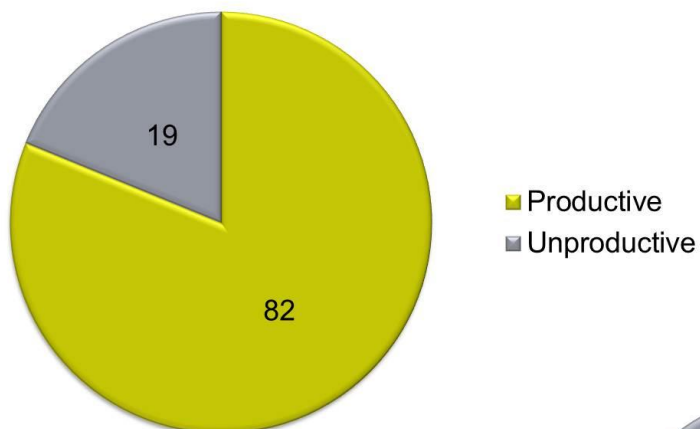
## 3. Those who are engaged

This group is committed to the organisation and is likely to be more productive.

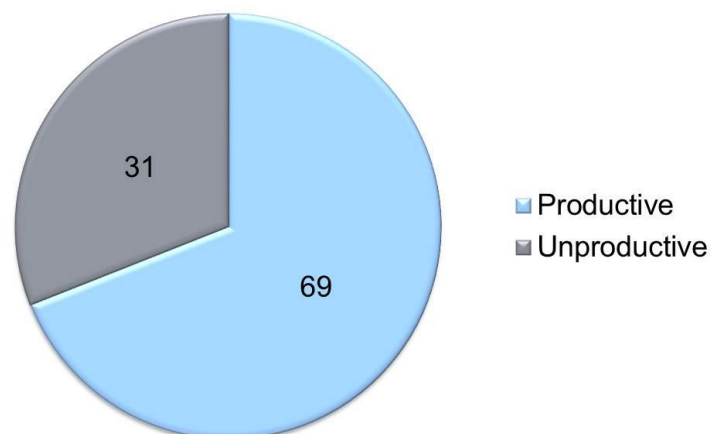
### Gallup research

Gallup's recent New Zealand research shows that engaged employees are engaged more often during the course of the day and are therefore more productive.

#### Engaged employees

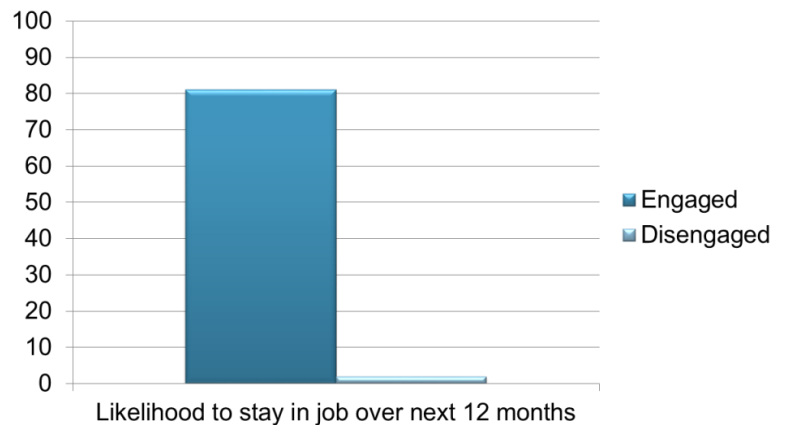


#### Disengaged employees



The chart below shows that engaged employees are more likely to stay in their jobs.

Other Gallup research shows that, compared to an engaged employee, actively disengaged employees are six times more likely to take a 'sickie'.



## What you can do as a leader

Because employee engagement is so influenced by the employee's intrinsic motivation, as a leader, you cannot influence engagement completely. However, you can still set up the environment to encourage and nurture engagement.

Macy and Schneider (2008) say that you need to give employees the right kinds of work to build their engagement. The work should involve:

- challenge
- variety
- autonomy.

In addition to this, as leader you can:

- make your expectations clear
- be fair and build a culture of trust
- recognise and celebrate superior behaviour.

It is worth investing time to influence the areas of the workplace that you can change to help employees stay engaged because not only are engaged employees more productive, they are also committed to the organisation and are well worth the investment of your time and energy.

## Sources

Gallup Inc. (2013, August 05). *Home*. Retrieved August 06, 2013, from Gallup:

<http://www.gallup.com/home.aspx>

Macey, W. H., & Schneider, B. (2008). The meaning of employee engagement. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 3- 30.

