
Human resource management — Employee engagement — Guidelines

*Management des ressources humaines — Engagement des employés
— Lignes directrices*

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 260, *Human resource management*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

While there are many definitions of employee engagement, the focus of this document is on fostering the good of employees and the good of the organization they work for and on mutual gains in the employment relationship. It can be seen as a blend of existing HR concepts, including job satisfaction, commitment to the organization and extra-role behaviour, for example discretionary effort^[10].

This document provides guidance to facilitate a common understanding of, and maintain consistency in, policies, processes and practices that promote a collaborative approach between organizations, employees and, where they exist, their recognized representatives to support employee engagement.

This dual focus on organizational goals and on enhancing the individual experience at work can be correlated with sustainable performance and is critical to the success of any organization and the well-being of people in the workplace.

Potential benefits of employee engagement can include but are not limited to:

- individual satisfaction with work and job quality;
- reduced absenteeism;
- improved employee retention;
- improved customer service;
- greater product or service innovation;
- improved organizational performance and sustainability;
- improved productivity.

This document is related to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 8, Decent Work and Economic Growth, and is intended to be used by:

- organizational governance bodies and leaders;
- people with HR expertise;
- managers;
- entrepreneurs;
- individuals in the workforce and their representatives;
- professional and trade bodies;
- academics and other professionals interested in employee engagement;
- developers of related standards.

Human resource management — Employee engagement — Guidelines

1 Scope

This document provides guidance on creating a mutually beneficial environment that encourages everyone to be connected with the objectives, purpose and values of the organization, and for the organization to support its people in a manner which provides quality work and opportunities for development and professional fulfilment. Organizations can use the guidance to determine what is practical or material to the organization's internal and external context regardless of its size, type, structure, nature or complexity, whether in the public, private or voluntary sector.

The document applies to anyone who works for or on behalf of an organization. The guidance contained in this document is not intended to infringe upon national labour laws, established collective agreements or collective bargaining.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>

3.1

social dialogue

negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between or among representatives of governments, employers and employees, on matters of common interest relating to economic and social policy

[SOURCE: ISO 26000:2010, 2.17, modified — Note 1 to entry removed.]

4 Principles

4.1 General

The following guiding principles apply:

- All organizational stakeholders have a role to play in improving employee engagement, principally the senior leaders, managers, HR experts, employees and employee representatives.
- Employee engagement should be embedded within the organization's culture and enacted through the organizational policies.
- Two-way communication is an essential part of employee engagement.

- Organizations will need to regularly assess progress against their employee engagement objectives. This can be achieved through surveys or interviews which should be bound by anonymity and confidentiality at the individual employee level.
- The health and well-being of the workforce is a priority consideration throughout this document. Organizations should therefore regularly assess the health risks associated with over-engagement over a prolonged period of time.
- Organizations should be aware of all legal provisions for data protection and privacy.

4.2 Employee engagement

From the perspective of this document, employee engagement is predicated from an inclusive workplace approach which informs, promotes and enables conditions where all members of an organization have a constructive voice and contribute productively in a manner meaningful to them. Engaged employees are more likely to be committed to their organization's goals and values and motivated to contribute to sustainable organizational performance. This is a two-way process whereby the organization provides an inclusive, supportive environment and individuals respond by freely providing discretionary effort^[17].

4.3 Approaching employee engagement

Engagement can be measured by the level of an individual's vigour, dedication and absorption in their work,^[15] in line with the seminal work of Schaufeli et al.^[15] Vigour refers to employees having high levels of energy and resilience while working and the willingness to invest effort in carrying out their roles. Dedication refers to employees being strongly involved in their work and experiencing a source of pride and challenge. Employees who are absorbed will be fully concentrated and engrossed in their work.

5 Employee engagement framework

5.1 General

The framework which guides this document is presented in [Figure 1](#). The figure highlights the association between some of the 'conditions' related to work engagement which organizations can change and enhance, and these are discussed in more detail in [Clauses 6](#) to [10](#).

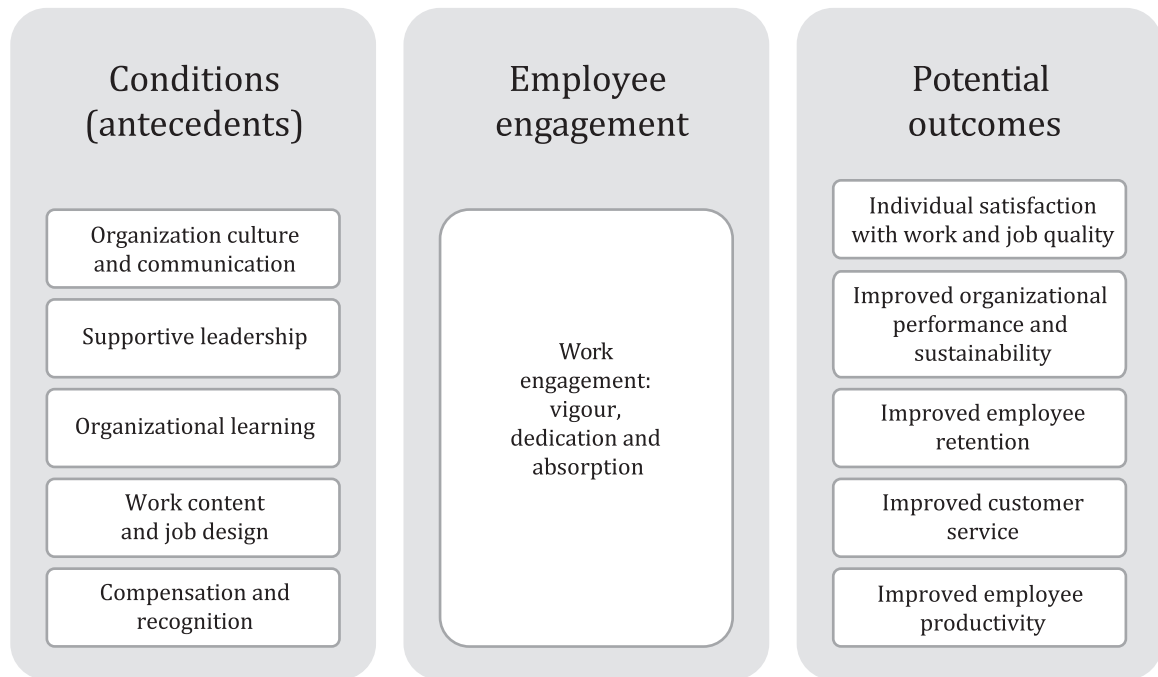


Figure 1 — Overview of employee engagement framework

5.2 Potential outcomes of employee engagement

A number of potential outcomes of employee engagement can be identified:

- individual satisfaction with work and job quality can increase^[6];
- organizational performance and future sustainability can improve where there are higher levels of employee engagement;
- improved employee retention;
- improved customer service can be reported;
- productivity can be increased.

5.3 Measuring employee engagement

The use of qualitative and quantitative methods of assessment can help to build an understanding of employee engagement. These include but are not limited to:

- focus groups, to gain a deeper understanding of employee experiences;
- employee surveys, either internally developed or existing survey instruments through third-party providers;
- validated instruments related to work engagement, such as the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale^[15].

6 Organization culture and communication

6.1 General

Organizational leaders should be visibly responsible for driving and enabling engagement. Within the organization there should be a shared understanding of employee engagement and this should be reflected consistently within organizational strategies. The organization should provide appropriate

and regular communications to stakeholders so that they are clear about role expectations, modes of operation and organizational policies, processes and practices.

To enhance employee engagement through organization culture and communication, organizations should observe the stated guidelines in the areas covered in [6.2](#) to [6.5](#).

6.2 Culture and values

The culture and values of an organization can have a significant impact on employees and their ability to carry out their role. It is important for employees to have an understanding of organizational culture and to have the opportunity to influence what the organization values in the present and future.

To enhance employee engagement through culture and values, organizations should:

- involve employees in developing organizational values so that they are clearly articulated and can be recognized, accepted and connected with;
- provide opportunities for employees to influence, understand, support and realize the organization's purpose, culture and values;
- promote a culture that enhances employees' feelings of being competent, valued and purposeful in their work;
- make managers responsible for being role models and for demonstrating organizational values and bringing them to life;
- assess what policies, processes and practices drive and support the measurement of employee engagement and identify areas of good practice or of concern, constructing action plans where necessary;
- promote clear links between agreed organization values and objectives at all levels.

6.3 Communication

An organization's communication strategy should foster two-way information sharing with employees and, where they exist, their recognized representatives. Information should be in accessible formats and employees, and their representatives, should be provided with genuine opportunities for consultation and feedback.

To enhance employee engagement through communication, organizations should:

- use established mechanisms and channels to enable two-way communication and give employees and their representatives feedback opportunities;
- maintain consistency of messages that are communicated internally and externally;
- provide managers with the tools and skills development opportunities to enable them to communicate clearly to employees;
- deliver clear internal communications to provide employees with key information and updates on developments;
- communicate their commitment to diversity and inclusion in all policies, processes and practices;
- highlight to managers the importance of providing constructive feedback to their team;
- provide regular opportunities for employees to discuss their performance with their manager.