joyous Labs

A 25 Question Set for Measuring Employee Engagement, Mood, and Experience
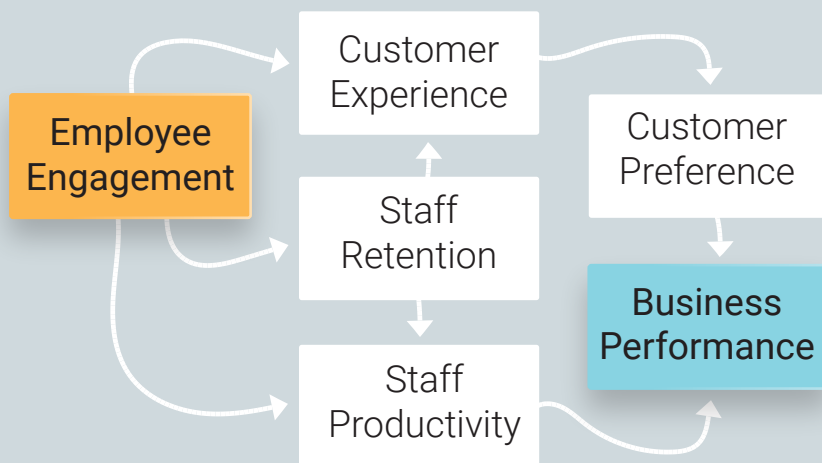
Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a measure of the **emotional commitment** your employees have to your business and its goals. Simply, engaged employees **care** about their work and their company. And employees that **care** are more likely to apply their discretionary effort to all the things that make your business great – from serving customers to inventing new products… everything!

Research shows that not only is better employee engagement correlated with better business performance, but also, having an engaged workforce actually drives great business performance[1]. The causation is clear: Engaged employees provide better customer service, stay working at the company longer, and are more productive[2].

Employee Engagement

→ Customer Experience

→ Staff Retention

→ Staff Productivity

Customer Preference

Business Performance

Employee Engagement is the gold standard in predicting company performance.

It's important to understand that *engagement* is different to *satisfaction* or *happiness*. Engagement is a **persistent** state of mind. It's like being a fan of a sports team. A lost game might disappoint the sports-fan, but it doesn't stop them supporting their team. The same thing happens with Employee Engagement. Everyone has good days and bad days at work, but commitment to the business and its goals will persist, even when an engaged employee is having a bad day.

The opposite of being **engaged** is being **disengaged** or **burnt-out**. Measuring engagement places employees on a spectrum from disengaged to engaged. Engaged can itself be defined as being Energized, Dedicated and Absorbed, each of which is also its own spectrum: From *exhausted* to *energized*, *cynical* to *dedicated*, and *distracted* to *absorbed*.

Disengaged	⟷	Engaged

Exhausted	⟷	Energized

High levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties.

Cynical	⟷	Dedicated

Being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge.

Distracted	⟷	Absorbed

Fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, so that time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work.

Traditional engagement questionnaires have a huge number of questions designed to self-reinforce and remove measurement error, however the work of Dutch researchers Schaufeli and Bakker[3] has shown a high correlation between the questions normally asked. This allows a much simpler question set to be designed.

The Joyous Labs Engagement Question Set builds on this research with a set of **nine** questions in plain language that measure the persistent state of mind of employees, with follow-on questions to encourage deeper dialog on the topics of energy levels, dedication and absorption in work.

"I get up and feel like going to work" is a state of mind, whereas "I normally start work early" is a behavior; it is evidence of engagement, but not necessarily engagement. The Joyous Engagement Question Set focuses on state of mind, not behavior.

Energized

Question 1.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
At work I feel full of energy.

0 1 2 3 4 **5** 6 7 8 9 10
0 - Strongly Disagree   10 - Strongly Agree

What most affects your energy levels at work?

Free form text...

Question 2.
Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
I get up and I feel like going to work.

Why do you feel this way?

Question 3.
Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
At my job I can persist even when things are difficult.

What helps you or hinders you most when things are difficult?

Dedicated

Question 4.
How proud are you of the work you do?

What are you most proud of?

Question 5.
Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
My job inspires me.

Tell us about what you find inspiring or discouraging.

Question 6.
Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
I am enthusiastic about my job.

Why do you feel this way?

Absorbed

Question 7.
Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
I feel happy when I am working intensely.

What makes you most happy at work?

Question 8.
Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
I am immersed in my work.

What are your biggest distractions at work?

Question 9.
Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
I get carried away when I am working.

Why do you feel this way?

Organizational Mood

While the beauty of Employee Engagement is that it is persistent, the flip-side is that it is not a fast-moving measure. By the time an engagement issue is identified it's normally already impacting company performance. Organizational Mood measures how employees are **feeling right now**. It is an action-oriented **leading indicator** of engagement that is sensitive to the day-to-day experiences of employees.

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To create a measure of organizational mood that is predictive of engagement the **antecedents of engagement** need to be understood. Research shows that positive employee engagement grows out of a combination of three components: Feeling aligned with the organizations vision[4]. Believing that the organization values employee contribution and cares about their wellbeing[5]. And, feeling positive about ones work in the organization and the organization itself.

This last component closely aligns with eNPS[6], or Employee Net Promoter Score, the theory that the employees with the most positive mood will actively promote the company to others.

Shared Vision

Perceived Support

Positive Mood

Employee Engagement
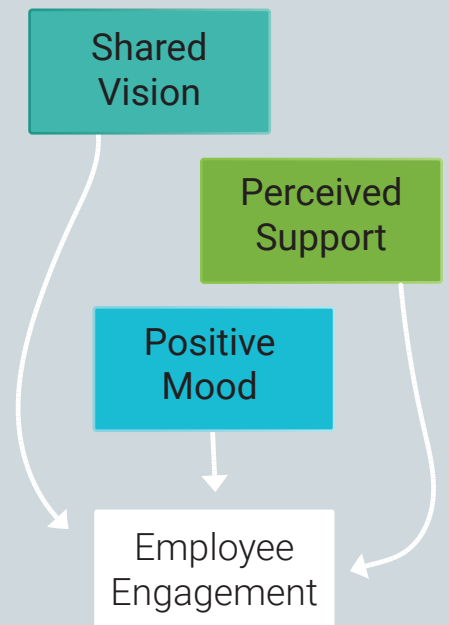
eNPS follows the construction of the NPS framework that is well tested for customer advocacy, sorting respondents into Promoters, Neutrals and Detractors. While an employee who is a promoter is adding value to the company, a detractor is actually removing value, working against your objectives. Neutral employees are just doing their functional role. For this reason eNPS is normally expressed as a net score of the percentage of promoters less the percentage of detractors.

The Joyous Organizational Mood Question Set combines measures of the **antecedents of engagement** with **eNPS** into an optimized six questions that are highly sensitive to shifting sentiment and predictive of future engagement.

eNPS

Thinking about the last week at work...
How likely are you to recommend working here to friends and associates?

0   1   2   3   4   **5**   6   7   8   9   10

0 - Very Unlikely   10 - Very Likely

Tell us more.

Free form text...

Thinking about the last week at work...
How likely are you to recommend our products/services to friends and associates?

Tell us more.

Shared Vision

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
I believe that we deploy resources effectively.

Tell us more.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
I understand how my work helps the business deliver on its vision.

Tell us more.

Perceived Support

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
**The organization values my contribution.**

Tell us more.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
The organization cares about my wellbeing.

Tell us more.

Employee Experience

Employee Experience is the summation all that people **encounter**, **observe** or **feel** while working in your business – the sheer diversity of experiences that make up work. It is the main determinant of employee engagement, which in turn is a predictor of company performance.

Employee Experience → Organizational Mood → Employee Engagement → Business Performance
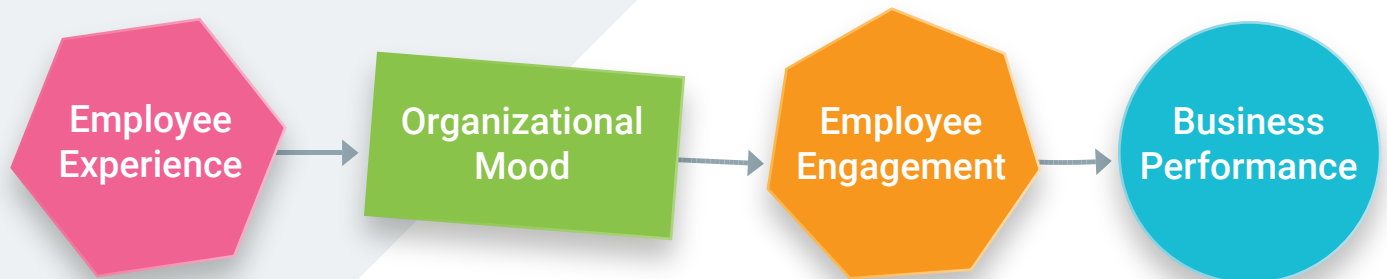
So, to improve business performance it pays to focus effort on shaping the employee experience. The goal of employee experience measurement is *to identify where experience can be improved to positively impact employee engagement*.

A Note on Fairness

Your engaged employees have an emotional connection to your business[7]. In the field of *customer* experience, it's been shown that a brand earns the right to establish an **emotional connection with a customer only when it has passed the threshold of "being easy to deal with"**. It's tempting to translate that approach into employee experience and focus on simplifying employees' interactions. But in fact, the right to establish an **emotional connection with employees comes from treating them fairly**.

An overdue simplification: Employees want to be treated fairly.

Journey

Environment

Fairness

Employee experience can be modeled as a hierarchy, with **fairness** as the foundation. Without a basis of fairness it is hard to build an engaged workforce[8]. On top of fairness sits an **environment** layer which covers the cultural and physical aspects of work. And finally, atop this layer is the employee **journey** – the set of experiences that mark the milestones of a role, from on-boarding to exit.

Each layer of the employee experience pyramid can be further broken down…

Journey	The **candidate experience** (recruiting, interviewing and hiring) through to **first 90 days**.	Employee **development** and **progression**. Training, career building, personal growth.	**Alumni**. What happens when someone leaves.	
Environ.	The company **culture**. The tone, the structure, the leadership style, the sense of purpose.	The **physical** environment, from workspace design, right through to team demographics.	The **tools** available to employees to do their jobs. Hardware, software and equipment.	
Fairness	Fair **recognition** of alignment to values and contribution to results.	Fair **understanding** of personal constraints and ambitions.	Fair **protection** from physical harm, harassment, bias or bullying.	Fair **exposure** to new challenges based on merit, performance and potential.

How do we measure experience? By asking questions. ***But what if asking the question changes the very thing we are trying to measure?*** That's exactly what happens, and it's not a bad thing—in fact it's a huge opportunity, because the questions themselves can be subtle but powerful change agents. The Joyous Employee Experience Question Set makes use of a three part question structure:

The Observer Effect: Observing a phenomenon changes that phenomenon

The opening question **sets the tone**. There is often an assumption implied by the question itself. If you ask an employee to rate agreement to the statement "My contribution to the company is fairly recognized", they will naturally infer that contribution matters, that it should be recognized and that fairness is important.

The second question **reinforces manager expectations**. It's less obvious, but questions also set expectations of manager behavior. A selection question where respondents can select possible answers to "I have been recognized for (select as many as apply)" reinforces with managers the areas they should be looking to recognize employees (e.g. customer service, results, suggestions, achievements, values).

The third question should be **open** and designed to both gather insights and encourage dialog – emphasizing that input from employees' is valued.

Fairness

Question 16.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
My contribution to the company is fairly recognized.

0 1 2 3 4 **5** 6 7 8 9 10
0 - Strongly Disagree   10 - Strongly Agree

I have been recognized for:

Values   **Results**   Suggestions

Customer Service   **Achievements**

None of the Above

Have you seen great work that has gone unnoticed?

Free form text...

Question 17.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
My manager cares about helping balance my constraints and ambitions.

Consideration has been given to my...
[Workload, Health, Safety, Family Commitments, Training, Career Plan]

How could we do better?

Question 18.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
At work I feel safe.

I am concerned about...
[Physical Safety, Harassment, Bias, Bullying]

How can we improve?

Question 19.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
Opportunities for new challenges are based on merit

To maximize my chances, my manager has helped guide my...
[Collaboration, Training, Experience, Network, Career-Plan]

How can we improve?

Work Environment

Question 20.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
The company culture supports the team.

We do these things well...
[Leadership, Vision, Purpose, Values, Traditions]

How can we improve?

Work Environment (continued)

Question 21.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
Our work environment enables the team to achieve its potential.

We do these things well...
[Health, Physical Comfort, Respect, Safety, Fun, Managing Stress, Diversity and Inclusion]

What have you seen elsewhere and thought: I wish we had done that here?

Question 22.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
We have the right tools to help the team achieve its potential.

We do these things well...
[Hardware, Software, Systems, Equipment, Vehicles]

How can we improve?

Employee Journey

Question 23.

How well do we treat candidates and new employees?

We do these things well...
[Recruitment, Interviewing, Hiring, Welcoming New Staff, New Staff Training, First 90 Days]

How can we improve?

Question 25.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
We treat employees leaving the organization with respect.

How can we improve?

Question 24.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
Working here is good for my development and career progression.

We do these things well...
[Training, On-the-job Learning, Mentoring, Career Planning, New Experiences, Challenging Work]

How can we improve?

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