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## Majority of American Workers Not Engaged in Their Jobs

Highly educated and middle-aged employees among the least likely to be engaged

BY NIKKI BLACKSMITH AND **JIM HARTER**

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WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Seventy-one percent of American workers are "not engaged" or "actively disengaged" in their work, meaning they are emotionally disconnected from their workplaces and are less likely to be productive. That leaves nearly one-third of American workers who are "engaged," or involved in and enthusiastic about their work and contributing to their organizations in a positive manner. This trend remained relatively stable throughout 2011.

### *Gallup Employee Engagement Index*

	Quarter 4 2010	Quarter 1 2011	Quarter 2 2011	Quarter 3 2011
% Engaged	28	30	30	29
% Not engaged	53	52	51	52
% Actively disengaged	19	18	19	19

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These findings are from a special Gallup Daily tracking series conducted on an ongoing basis since the fourth quarter of 2010 to explore American workers' engagement levels. Gallup's employee engagement index is based on worker

responses to 12 actionable workplace elements with proven linkages to performance outcomes, including productivity, customer service, quality, retention, safety, and profit. Further research shows significant linkages between engagement at work and health and well-being outcomes.

Americans' levels of engagement at work are generally consistent with Gallup's trends on workplace engagement from various studies since 2000. The current percentage of engaged employees is similar to the historical high of 30% in 2001 to 2002 and 2006 to 2007. The percentage who are actively disengaged is near the high of 20% recorded in 2007 and 2008.

### **Highly Educated and Middle-Aged Workers Less Likely to Be Engaged**

Americans who have at least some college education are significantly less likely to be engaged in their jobs than are those with a high school diploma or less. Additionally, workers aged 30 to 64 are less likely to be engaged at work than are those who are younger or older. Workers aged 65 and older are the most likely to be engaged in their jobs.

Men are much less likely than women to be engaged at work. There are no significant differences in employee engagement by income level.

### *Percentage of Engaged Workers, by Demographics*

	% Engaged
AGE	
18-29	32
30-44	28
45-64	28
65+	44
EDUCATION	
High school or less	34
Technical/Vocational/Some college	27
College graduate	28
Postgraduate work or degree	27
GENDER	
Male	27
Female	33
ANNUAL INCOME	
Less than \$36,000	30
\$36,000 to \$89,999	28
\$90,000+	30

Quarter 1-Quarter 3 2011

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## Implications for American Businesses and the U.S. Economy

Over the past several decades, business and psychological researchers -- including [Gallup](#) -- have identified a strong relationship between employees' workplace engagement and their respective company's overall performance. It is likely that organizations with engaged employees experience positive business performance, while workplaces with not engaged or actively disengaged employees are more likely to experience lower productivity.

Gallup has also found that [engaged employees](#) are twice as likely as those who are actively disengaged to say their employer is hiring. The national engagement data reveal that businesses in the U.S. -- and in turn, the U.S. economy as a whole -- might not be reaching maximum worker performance because of the high percentage of not engaged and actively disengaged employees. Increasing the percentage of engaged workers in the U.S. could spur a significant amount of job growth, as detailed in Gallup's latest book, [The Coming Jobs War](#).

Because jobs are more complex and require employees to have higher levels of skills and knowledge, business should be concerned that the more highly educated workers are less engaged. The less engaged employees are with their work and their organization, the more likely they are to leave to an organization. Turnover can be costly, and turnover in professional roles, such as nurses or engineers, is more costly than turnover in entry-level or front-line roles.

Organizations can do several things to increase their employees' engagement. Gallup researchers found that identifying and hiring top management talent can influence workers' engagement and organizations' business performance.

## About the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index

The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index tracks well-being in the U.S., U.K., and Germany and provides best-in-class solutions for a healthier world. To learn more, please visit [well-beingindex.com](http://well-beingindex.com).

### SURVEY METHODS

Results are based on telephone interviews conducted as part of Gallup Daily tracking July 1-Sept. 30, 2011, with a random sample of 2,341 adults who are employed by an employer, aged 18 and older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia, selected using random-digit-dial sampling.

For results based on the total sample of employed adults, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum margin of sampling error is  $\pm 3$  percentage points.

Interviews are conducted with respondents on landline telephones and cellular phones, with interviews conducted in Spanish for respondents who are primarily Spanish-speaking. Each sample includes a minimum quota of 400 cell phone respondents and 600 landline respondents per 1,000 national adults, with additional minimum quotas among landline respondents by region. Landline telephone numbers are chosen at random among listed telephone numbers. Cell phone numbers are selected using random-digit-dial methods. Landline respondents are chosen at random within each household on the basis of which member had the most recent birthday.

Samples are weighted by gender, age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, education, region, adults in the household, and phone status (cell phone only/landline only/both, cell phone mostly, and having an unlisted landline number). Demographic weighting targets are based on the March 2010

Current Population Survey figures for the aged 18 and older non-institutionalized population living in U.S. telephone households. All reported margins of sampling error include the computed design effects for weighting and sample design.

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

For more details on Gallup's polling methodology, visit [www.gallup.com](http://www.gallup.com).

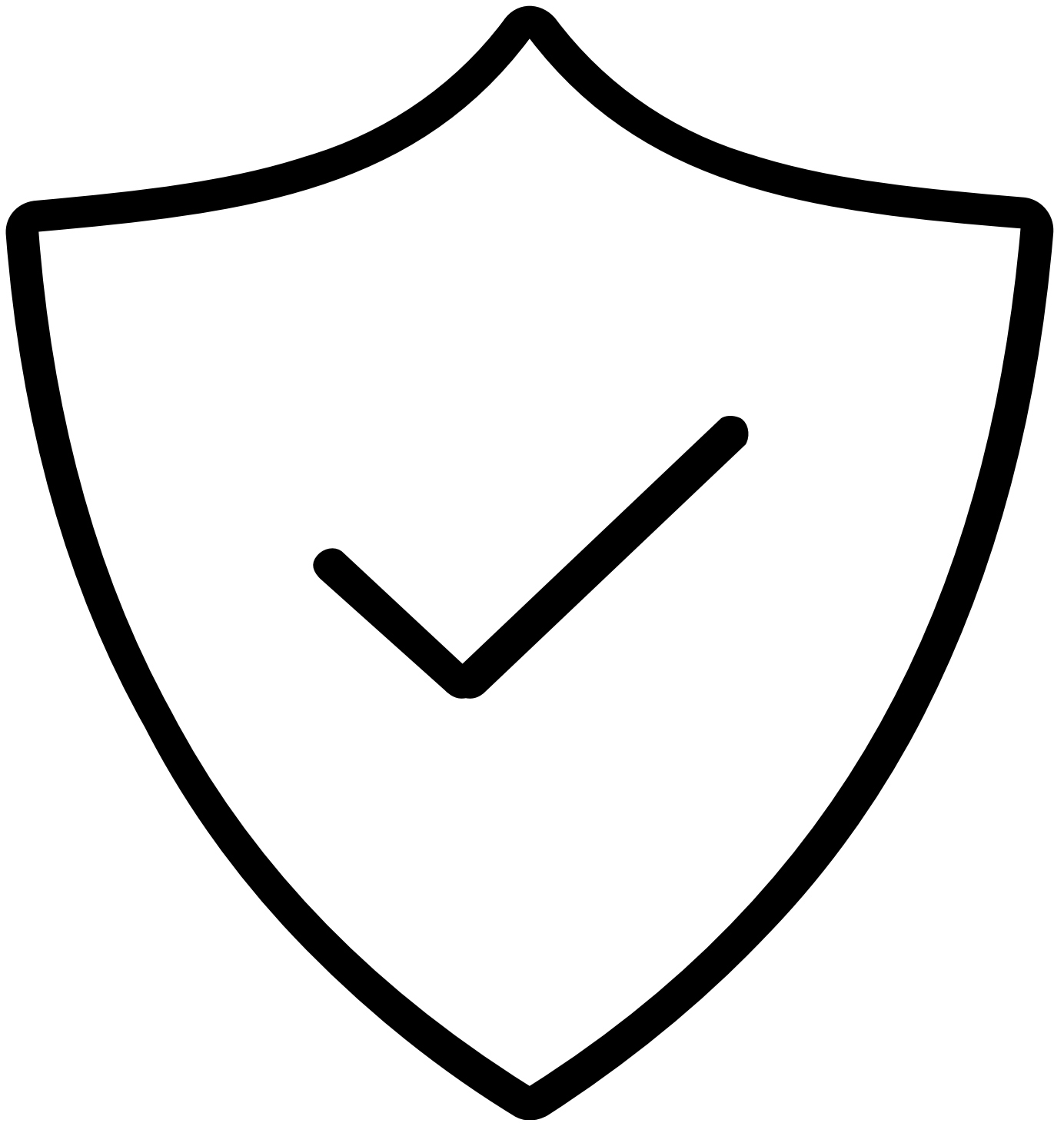
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