

**Course****Attracting and Cultivating Talent****Lessons****1 Shape a Positive Employee Journey**

Why focus on employee engagement?

The employee journey

Align purpose to daily work

Develop an inclusive team culture

Embrace flexibility

Model work-life balance

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## Shape a Positive Employee Journey

What do successful teams have in common? They're made up of people who are engaged in their work and feel valued and accepted. Discover your role in cultivating a positive work environment for your team.

 13 Minutes

### Why focus on employee engagement?

Think about your current role. What drew you to the position and what keeps you there? **If you're like most people, one key factor is a meaningful and positive work experience.**

Research shows that employees who are invested and engaged in their work are far more likely to stay.\*

And in a world altered by the Covid-19 pandemic and a tightening labor market, more and more professionals are seeking fulfillment in their jobs beyond a paycheck.\*

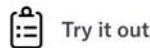
It's true that senior leaders and human resources specialists develop many of the policies that contribute to corporate culture and help to engage employees. **But you also play an important role.** Your attention to the people you work with beyond their daily tasks and business goals provides them—and you—with meaning and connection.

When you focus on fostering a positive work experience, you:

Retain and develop employees

Empower collaboration

Boost innovation and productivity



 ADDED TO YOUR LESSON KIT

Which of these statements do you agree with? Pick all that apply.

The work I do challenges me to grow and learn.

- I feel a sense of belonging at work and a connection to the people I work with.
- My personal values align with my organization's mission and purpose.
- I feel personally satisfied from my contribution.
- My opinions and suggestions are heard and considered.

 Take a moment

 ADDED TO YOUR LESSON KIT

If you don't agree with the statements above, what can you do to make your own work experience more meaningful?

You can make your work more meaningful by learning new things

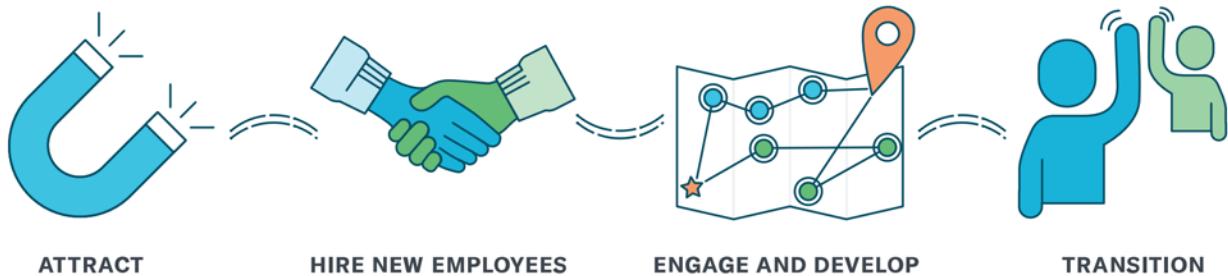


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## The employee journey

An employee's experience with your company is a journey that starts when they first see a job posting that interests them and ends when they leave.

Your role in that journey includes these steps:



- **Attract** the right candidates by crafting a compelling job description and recruiting a diverse group of applicants.
- **Hire new employees**, help them acclimate to your organization and their new positions, and make them feel they belong.

- **Engage and develop** team members by providing them with work that is meaningful, personalized, and full of learning opportunities.

- **Transition** employees with grace when they choose to move to other teams or leave your organization.

As Angela Cheng-Cimini, senior vice president of talent and chief human resources officer at Harvard Business Publishing, explains, managers like you are the single most important influence on the employee's experience, wherever they are on their journey.

## Your Role in the Employee Journey



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**Angela Cheng-Cimini**—Senior Vice President of Talent and Chief Human Resources Officer, Harvard Business Publishing

Human resources departments develop programs and policies that contribute to organizational culture, but managers like you are the single biggest influence on your employees' journey and sense of inclusion.

[Make a connection](#)

[ADDED TO YOUR LESSON KIT](#)

Think about bosses you've worked for in the past. What did you learn from them about how to engage with people at each stage of the employee journey?

I learned that good bosses are kind when hiring, helpful during training



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## Align purpose to daily work

Studies show that employees today want to feel part of something bigger than themselves. Many of us want to make a difference in our communities and the world. **Having a sense of purpose brings meaning to daily work, provides motivation, and leads to higher productivity.**

You're probably familiar with your organization's mission and vision statements. These are used to align and focus teams throughout the company on a shared strategic direction and goals. **But purpose is a little different. It's your organization's core reason for existing and its unique contribution to society.**

EXAMPLE

### **Evergreen Essentials' commitment to sustainability**



Evergreen Essentials has built its brand around a strong sense of purpose. Founded by environmental scientists, the company produces sustainable household and personal care items with a commitment to social responsibility at its core. Evergreen Essentials invests heavily in research to develop innovative, eco-friendly packaging and partners with local communities to source ingredients sustainably.

Beyond its product line, Evergreen Essentials dedicates a portion of its profits to environmental conservation efforts and education programs, actively working to create a more sustainable future for all. The company's employees feel confident in knowing their contributions make the world a better place.

People want to work in an organization that supports and aligns with their personal values. \* That's where you come in!

**“Those who lead by example and demonstrate passion for what they do make it much easier for their followers to do the same.”**

—Marshall Goldsmith, author and leadership coach

As a manager, begin by making your organization's purpose relevant to your team. Try these practices:

- **Lead discussions about the positive impact your company has** on its customers and the world.
- **Share your personal sense of purpose** and how your work allows you to fulfill it.
- **Help team members see how their work contributes** to both fulfilling their own purpose and supporting the company's important purpose.
- **Ensure people's job descriptions** clearly identify how their work serves the organization's purpose.

When you regularly prompt people to talk about purpose—theirs and your company's—you inspire a greater sense of connection and bring context and meaning to your team's work.

Here, Hubert Joly, former CEO of Best Buy, describes how you can help the people on your team connect their personal sense of purpose to the work your team does.

## Help Team Members Reach Their Dreams



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**Hubert Joly**—Senior Lecturer, Harvard Business School

If you want to help the people on your team find meaning in their work, find out what drives them. Then, show them how their dreams and sense of purpose connect to the work they do for your organization.

[Make a connection](#)

[ADDED TO YOUR LESSON KIT](#)

What is your organization's purpose? How does your team contribute to fulfilling that purpose?

My organization's purpose is to help people by providing useful information and support.



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## Develop an inclusive team culture

Your team's culture is the answer to the question, "How do we work together?" It develops from the way you and other members routinely show up, both one-on-one and in group settings. **In a strong collaborative team culture, members support one another, communicate openly, and listen to each other respectfully.**

Take a moment

ADDED TO YOUR LESSON KIT

How would you describe your team's culture? For example, is it caring, competitive, congenial—or something else? What role do you play in shaping that culture?

My team's culture is caring and supportive



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You help shape your team's culture, so you have an important opportunity to make everyone feel included. **Inclusion means ensuring everyone feels safe and welcome to bring insights from their own experience to the conversation.** Your team benefits from multiple perspectives on how to accomplish goals and tasks. And people are more likely to stay in an organization that values diversity.

What steps can you take to create an inclusive team culture? Be sure to:

- **Set everyone up for success** by providing access to equal opportunity and resources.
- **Get to know each member of your team individually**, listen to what's important to them, and ask what strengths they bring to their role. \*
- **Make a point of praising good work** and responding to people's concerns.

Try it out

LESSON KIT

Which of the following actions do you regularly take with your team?

- I make time to meet one-on-one with team members to answer questions and provide constructive feedback.
- I encourage questions and listen to feedback from team members.
- I empower team members to collaborate with each other to identify creative solutions to challenges.
- I ensure training is available to every member of my team.
- I trust my team to deliver on expectations within a flexible schedule.
- I encourage team members to share and celebrate success.

### Make a connection

 ADDED TO YOUR LESSON KIT

Are there any statements you didn't pick that you'll try? What other steps can you take to build an inclusive team culture?

Yes, I'll try to listen more to others' ideas and include everyone in discussions.



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### TOOL

#### Improve Your Team Culture

 [Download Tool](#)

Want to learn more about how to foster an inclusive team environment? Consider visiting the "[Lead Inclusively](#)" lesson within the Harvard ManageMentor Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging course.

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## Embrace flexibility

The Covid-19 pandemic caused many teams to expand beyond the physical office space to remote settings. As a result, the way people approached their work and achieved productivity changed in important ways.

**You may notice that team members now desire some degree of flexibility.** For example, they may want more choices in where and when they work. While there will always be certain job roles that can't offer flexible options, consider where you *can* give people the autonomy to make choices. Talk to team members and listen to what flexibility means to *them*. \*

Flexibility can take many forms, including:

### Schedule

Tap to flip ↗

Allow team members to vary their working hours to suit their lifestyle, while setting core hours when everyone is available for collaboration.

### Place

Tap to flip ↗

Offer opportunities for employees to work from home, in an office, or a combination of both.

### Resources

Tap to flip ↗

Provide the digital tools needed to enhance team communication and collaboration from anywhere.

### Workload

Tap to flip ↗

Offer people part-time schedule opportunities if your company supports this option.

Felix Oberholzer-Gee, professor at Harvard Business School, gives an example of the value one company created by offering employees flexibility.

### Make Work More Attractive for Your Team



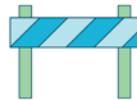
**Felix Oberholzer-Gee**—Professor, Harvard Business School

By making small improvements to working conditions, you can create enormous value for members of your team.

## Model work-life balance

**Members of your team desire and deserve a satisfying life beyond work—and so do you!** You set the tone for your team through your actions. By balancing work with a fulfilling life outside the office, you encourage team members to do the same. When employees are happy and engaged, they're more likely to stay with your organization—and spread the word to others about your team's positive work culture.

If, on the other hand, you're always on call with no real downtime, team members will feel pressured to do the same. **It's up to you to promote healthier ways of working.** Here are ideas to help you lead the way: \*



### Set boundaries between professional and personal time

Start by not sending emails or messages to team members during off-hours.



### Respect commitments

Be supportive of non-work obligations such as medical appointments or parent-teacher meetings.



### Facilitate opportunities for team members to socialize

Whether in person or virtually, informal conversations allow people to connect with others and build relationships.

**These actions show your team members that you see them as people and not just as workers.** And they help you create a work environment where individuals feel respected, valued, and supported. Cultivating a positive employee experience helps you attract, retain, and develop talented people. It is a vital part of your company's success and ability to thrive!



## 30-Second Takeaway

- **Create a positive employee experience** to engage your team, improve productivity, and retain key employees.
- **Connect team members' sense of purpose** and their daily responsibilities to the organizational mission.
- **Cultivate a team culture** that generates a sense of inclusion and belonging.
- **Embrace flexibility** and consider ways to give your team members autonomy about where, when, and how they work.
- **Model work-life balance** through your own efforts to set boundaries between personal and professional time.

Take action

ADDED TO YOUR LESSON KIT

What action will you take next to foster a positive and meaningful experience for people on your team and in your organization?

I'll try to listen more, include everyone



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Rethinking Our Relationship with Work (Back to Work, Better) Rethinking Our Relationship with Work (

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About Transcript

**Rethinking Our Relationship with Work (Back to Work, Better)**

Alison Beard, Emily Esfahani Smith

Emily Esfahani Smith, author of "The Power of Meaning," has long studied how people find fulfillment. As the ongoing pandemic causes many of us to rethink how and why we do our jobs, she offers advice on how to find more enjoyment and engagement,

## Lesson Kit

Includes all of your responses, key concepts of the lesson, handouts, and worksheets

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## Ready to Move On?

When you are finished exploring the above material, mark this portion of the lesson as complete.

[Complete Lesson](#)

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Articles on Attracting and Cultivating Talent selected from Harvard Business Review. [See all related articles here. →](#)

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