

Employee Engagement Toolkit

Simple Guide to Supporting Employee Engagement during Challenging and Uncertain Times

LITTLE THINGS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER TO HELP US FEEL CONNECTED, APPRECIATED AND VALUED AT WORK – KEY FACTORS FOR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT. ESPECIALLY, WHEN BIG THINGS ARE DAUNTING, SUCH AS A LOSS OF CONTROL, RAPID CHANGE AND AN OVERHAUL OF THE WAY WE DO OUR JOBS. THIS RESOURCE HELPS YOU TAKE DELIBERATE STEPS AND MAKE A LASTING IMPACT ON ENGAGEMENT DURING CHALLENGING AND UNCERTAIN TIMES.

WHAT IS ENGAGEMENT?

Employee engagement is the extent to which employees commit to something or someone in their organization, how hard they work and how long they stay as a result of that commitment.

Commitment includes the rational and emotional commitment that employees have with the organization. Rational commitment is defined as the extent to which employees believe that the organization has their best interests in mind. Emotional commitment is the extent to which employees value, enjoy, and believe in their organizations.

WHY IS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IMPORTANT?

Employee engagement impacts the discretionary effort employees put into their work. And, discretionary effort affects performance. For agencies, discretionary effort and intent to stay influence agency's ability to meet goals and service requirements. Those with lower engagement levels are more likely to leave an organization.

Supporting engagement requires:

- ✓ Measuring and understanding the baseline
- ✓ Identifying strengths and opportunities
- ✓ Determining appropriate actions
- ✓ Implementing those actions
- ✓ Measuring success of those actions

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENGAGEMENT?

Employees are responsible for their engagement. Managers foster an optimal environment and employees' self-engagement in areas such as optimism, assertiveness, innovativeness and problem-solving.

How employee engagement is supported during times of uncertainty will influence future levels of engagement and an agency's employment brand.

It Starts with You – Take a Minute to Reflect

[Eighteen Outlooks Explain why Some Employees are Happy at Work and Others are Miserable.](#)



Things to Consider

Meet people where they are during times of uncertainty. Not everyone is in the same place or has the same needs.

Ensure engagement is supported equitably. In many agencies, some employees are working remotely and some are working on site. Be sure to support engagement appropriately for different circumstances. One size does not fit all.

We are all responsible for engagement.

How Are Agencies Measuring Engagement During Uncertainty?

- ✓ Short pulse survey
- ✓ Dialogue sessions with managers to understand and discuss how to resolve challenges
- ✓ Leadership email to 15 employees each week to check-in with them
- ✓ Staff meetings
- ✓ 1:1 Discussions

Employee Engagement is meeting people where they are!

Practical Tips from Your Commonwealth Teammates

<h3>Staying Healthy</h3> <p><i>Click image for Commonwealth.</i></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Do a world walking challenge▪ Yoga classes▪ Weekly Wellnotes▪ Mindful moments sessions▪ Touch base with co-workers on well-being▪ Quarantine 15▪ Employee Assistance Program (EAP) (including wage and waived employees through 9/30)	<h3>Staying Motivated</h3>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Give yourself breaks▪ Set deadlines. Break tasks into smaller chunks▪ Stay in touch. Find someone—or a few people—you can share with during the day▪ Peer-to-peer recognition▪ Celebrate special occasions and successes▪ Keep learning; take an online class▪ Watch a TED Talk: The Puzzle of Motivation
<h3>Staying Joyful</h3>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Practice the 3:1 Positivity Ratio▪ Express and share gratitude▪ Avoid negativity▪ Surround yourself with positive people▪ Start the day on a good note▪ Help a colleague	<h3>Staying Connected</h3>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Virtual team building▪ Salute to our COVA “essential heroes”▪ Create a space on agency intranet for staying connected:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Blog for employee sharing and connection○ Share pictures of family pets, home office○ Newsletters▪ Podcast virtual brown bag series▪ Agency all-hands virtual meetings▪ Weekly communications from agency directors

Support for Supervisors



- [Motivate](#)
- [Engage](#)
- [Be happy](#)
- [Inspire](#)

As the Commonwealth begins to focus on a new approach to work, we have the opportunity to create and implement a “new normal” for supporting employee engagement. Some agencies have created “New Normal Initiatives” in preparation for reimaging and reinventing the way work is done.

How are you supporting engagement in your agency?

Thank you to the following agencies for sharing their best practices and input:
Department of Medical Assistance Services, Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Behavioral Health and Development Services, Virginia Information Technologies Agency, Department of Juvenile Justice, Virginia Department of Emergency Management, Virginia Department of Social Services, Virginia Department of Education, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Virginia Department of Health, Department of Historic Resources, Department of Conservation of Recreation, and Virginia Workers’ Compensation Commission

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