

# Employee Engagement & Morale

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In times of significant organizational change, we may face discomfort, questions, and fear from employees, with potential impacts on their engagement and morale, resulting in resignation, lost productivity, frustration, lack of clarity, lost momentum, feeling disconnected, etc.

In these times of uncertainty, managers play a critical role : supporting their teams - both individually and collectively - while ensuring *business continuity*. Managers remain the most trusted "communication channel."

We've listened to you through the Pulse survey and here you will find guidance to support you as a manager, by providing a better understanding of:

1. The managerial role in engaging talent
2. The emotional aspects of change
3. How to deal with uncertainty in the workplace
4. How to ensure business continuity in times of uncertainty
5. How to build engagement by listening to your employees.

### Managerial Role in Engaging Talent

The Managerial role is critical in engaging talent.

- **Identify key people:** Who on my team has the talent, skills, and expertise that I want to keep?
- **Retain:** We need to keep our talent engaged, and understand our role and impact as leaders on the retention of talent.
- **Coach:** The Manager's role is to *care and dare and coach* (provide resources, listen, coach etc.). Unleash the potential of the individual and empower them to seek their own resources.
- **Provide attention:** It is important that managers give people the time and attention they need, otherwise the employees will turn to others who are available: make sure that YOU are the go-to person.
- **Ensure business continuity:** Continue to ensure excellent performance is *expected, recognized and delivered*.

### Addressing the Emotional Aspects of Change

You probably won't be able to get "back to business" **until you address the emotional aspects of change** and its effect on you and people around you.

- Talk with your employees about the organizational changes.
- Help them understand that a *business transformation* is a *business decision*.
- Do not expect to discuss many specifics; listen and care for their questions and concerns about their job and the business.
- Deal with emotions: identify where your colleagues' positions are in the change curve (see the Kübler-Ross curve on the next slide) in order to engage the appropriate actions at the right moment

### Dealing with Uncertainty in the Workplace...

We need to CARE about the people affected by the changes and DARE to create a workplace culture that encourages employees to raise their hands and ask for help.

#### Offer Support

- **Know what to look for.** Common signs of employee disengagement include a decline in work quality, negative behavior, employees who are normally strong contributors become quiet, withdrawal from the team, failure to communicate.
- **Open your door.** Employees want and deserve access to you.
- **Allow grieving.** For many, everything has changed. Your employees deserve to experience a normal feeling of loss.
- **Listen actively.** Ask your employees how they are doing, and allow them to vent, complain, and tell you what they need and want. *It also means reaching out to your virtual team members by phone or video to listen actively.*

- **Celebrate small successes.** Especially now, people are very sensitive to appreciation and gestures of gratitude. [Click here to find more information about Recognition at Syensqo.](#)

## Offer Communication

- Be mindful of the **tone you set and the language you use** as a manager to help employees feel they have a safe space to receive the communication.
- Tell employees everything you do know (**the good, the bad and the ugly**), and what you don't.
- **Don't shy away** from tough news or developments.
- Encourage employees to **ask questions and raise concerns.**
- **Be present when communicating** in order to demonstrate your interest and build rapport and trust.
- **Listen to understand**, not for the sake of responding.
- Let employees **participate in the change.**

Discourage individuals from spending time with colleagues who are **constantly negative** (a spiral effect).

## Offer Structure

- Provide **clear direction** to keep individuals focused and active.
- **Revise priorities or change tactics** to get you through uncertain and tough times.....without sacrificing safety, customer satisfaction or other critical requirements
- Employees are watching your actions and listening to what you say. **Model the new behaviors yourself.**

## Ensuring business continuity in time of uncertainty

Uncertainty is a state of doubt about the future or about what is the right thing to do. It's just like "piloting in the fog"!

These doubts may create anxiety because people feel passive, considering...

- We are not in the driver seat of the organisational design of the 2 companies
- We don't have visibility to the overall process
- It's too early to think about the target org chart and our future roles...
- We are only sure of the separation of the two entities

Mitigate the distraction while ensuring business continuity, starting with an awareness of employees' concerns.

Then, the ability to make the difference between situations where I have influence.

## Employees are concerned...

It is natural and understandable for employees to experience one or more of the following emotions, which can affect their engagement, productivity, commitment, and morale:

- Sadness
- Anger
- Guilt
- Fear and anxiety
- Apathy
- Difficulty concentrating at work
- Loss of trust in the organization
- Overwhelmed by workload

Leaders can help employees reframe an individual's concerns over uncertainty by identifying the things they can and cannot control. Here are resources that can give individuals a sense of control :

<b>Focus on preparation</b>	Register for <a href="#">JobMaker</a> : a guided online tool to help you discover what makes you unique, reflect on your career accomplishments, pitch your career in 3 minutes, and prepare for your next steps.

<b>for my next steps.</b>	
<b>Identify the skills that I want to develop</b>	Think about the areas that have been the focus of check-in and development discussions with your manager.
<b>Build a personalized development plan</b>	View the catalog of free training resources available in YOUNGgrow by searching keywords like "influence" or "customers." What support / resources do you need in order to continue your development?
<b>Complete "My Profile" in My HR Services</b>	As positions are created and opportunities arise within the two new organizations, it is critical that your employee profile is up to date. Ensure it is reflective of your job history and accomplishments, as well as your ambitions.
<b>Focus on your mental well-being and resilience</b>	During times of change, our mental well-being can suffer from increasing stress and demands. Take advantage of <a href="#">the well-being webinars and workshops</a> that Syensqo has recently launched, as well as the <a href="#">Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)</a> that are available to all Syensqo employees. No matter what you're going through, remember that you can always <a href="#">speak up</a> , share your doubts and express your feelings.

## Preventing disengagement: The concept of “engagement” discussions

### Will you stay?

Uncertainty and the deep transformation may trigger individuals to disengage or even consider leaving (the team, the company, etc...). This is a normal question and should not be considered as a lack of loyalty.

Many managers avoid discussing this possibility...

- For fear of planting ideas in people's heads.
- Some managers are afraid they will be unable to do anything anyway, so why ask?
- Some managers feel they can't make room in their already busy schedules to have discussions with their people.

As manager, you have the ability to anticipate and address disengagement and resignation among your top talents. The concept of “engagement discussions” aims to assess the foundations of each employee's commitment and should be considered a normal part of check-in discussions.

### Be proactive and ask your employees\* ...

- How are you today?
- What is currently your greatest challenge or roadblock?
- What are the most energizing aspects of your work?
- What do you like about your work?
- What would you like to accomplish in the near future?
- What strengths and talents do you have that we are not utilizing?
- What can we do to ensure you feel supported in your career goals?
- What can we do to ensure you feel recognized for your contributions?
- What kind of recognition makes you feel valued?
- What aspects of your job, team, leadership, or the company do you wish you could change?
- What is influencing (*positively or negatively*) your success?
- What will keep you here?
- What might drive you away?
- What can I do differently to best assist you?
- What can I do differently to keep you engaged?

\* Note that this list is not meant to be exhaustive or prescriptive. You can choose several questions from this list to supplement your own.

### Ask yourself: *How well did I do the following?*

During the conversation, did I...

- **Build rapport with the employee?**
  - Put the employee at ease
  - Express appropriate emotions

- **Listen to the employee?**
  - Maintain eye contact; effective non-verbal actions
  - Ask clarifying questions
- **Seek to fully understand the employee's situation?**
  - Ask open-ended questions (*Why? What? How?*)
- **Provide effective suggestions or recommendations that were :**
  - Appropriate for the situation
  - Reasonable chance to complete successfully
- **Conclude the conversation with a clear plan of action for employee/myself/others?**
  - Confirm who will do what, and when
  - Provide a time for follow-up or checking status

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