



# The whole person perspective of engagement

Harness what makes your employees happy, healthy, and effective.



# Introduction

If you're here, you've heard it before: the buzz about engagement. Assess it in the right manner, and you'll reap the rewards of performance, profit, and loyalty.

Here at SurveyMonkey, we've powered millions of surveys that connect HR professionals and employees. What did we learn? The right questions are made better by a framework that makes their answers useful. We created SurveyMonkey Engage to do just that.

In this article we'll share:

**01**

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**Why measuring engagement is about perspective**

**02**

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**The origins of our whole-person definition of engagement**

**03**

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**How the Engage Method works**

# Defining employee engagement for the 21st century workplace

We get it—you're competing for the best talent and you want that talent to stick around and flourish within your business. It's a new landscape in the 21st century. Employees increasingly see work as a part of life and demand more from their relationship with the workplace.



35%

of employees don't find their work personally meaningful



48%

of employees don't see a clear path for themselves at their current company



51%

of employees would take a job elsewhere if offered

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When compared as a whole, highly engaged businesses significantly outperformed businesses with low engagement: with 20% higher sales and 21% more profitability

Employees' needs change from generation to generation, whether you're dealing with Millennials' purpose-seeking connectedness to a growing Boomer set nearing retirement. Attaining a holistic view of employee engagement enables your business to break through the labels and understand your multigenerational workforce in full.

Employee engagement is unique among the issues facing the companies of tomorrow because its face changes at every angle. Are you strictly defining engagement as job satisfaction? Then you're going to miss out on how a person's feeling of inclusion impacts loyalty. Defining it as discretionary effort applied to tasks? Similarly, you narrow your scope and risk missing opportunities for improvement via correcting role fit or work-life balance.

The bottom line is this: the complexities of modern engagement present an opportunity to stand out, to find more and better ways to connect with and support your employees. The secret is in finding a framework that makes it easy to surface those wide-ranging opportunities and convert them into action. The methodology you'll read about in the following paragraphs outlines how Engage takes the complex and makes it simple.

To this end, SurveyMonkey Engage defines employee engagement as **the health of the relationship between an employee and their workplace.**

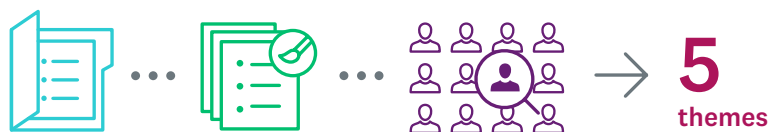
# The Core Factors of employee engagement

Engage strives to provide a nuanced and holistic view of engagement—what we refer to as the Whole Person Perspective. We're trying to capture the fingerprint of all the things that matter to employees and, in turn, affect their health, happiness, and effectiveness at work. How do we make sense of such a thing? That's where the method comes in. The Engage Method breaks our broad definition of engagement into smaller, concrete areas that make it easy to ask questions, assess findings, and plan action. Called the Core Factors of engagement, they encompass the individual experience of work—both on the job and at home—and zoom out to explore relationships that span teams and organizations.

## The research behind the factors

After extensive research on current best practices, we compiled a list of 20 themes that we believe represent the full experience of employee engagement. These range from specific (like compensation) to more abstract (like feeling that one's work is meaningful).

We asked 250 employed individuals across industries to rate how important each theme was to their experience at work. Additionally, we asked 250 HR professionals to rate how important they believed each theme was to employees' experience. Both groups were offered a space to add additional themes they thought were important. From this, we narrowed the list from 20 themes to the five that were deemed most important.



## Job Satisfaction



Are your employees satisfied by their daily work? Job Satisfaction comes down to matching the right skills to the right role and supporting an employee with adequate feedback and reward.

*Subfactors include:*

- Role Fit
- Autonomy
- Recognition

## Personal Engagement



Employees are people with needs and concerns that stretch far beyond the office. Personal Engagement looks after the whole employee.

*Subfactors include:*

- Whole Person
- Work-Life Balance
- Stress

## Visible Future



Do your employees see their future at your company? An engaged employee needs a path to walk and destination that's clear and captivating.

*Subfactors include:*

- Path for Advancement
- Transparent Leadership
- Company Direction

## Team Dynamics



Groups have the potential to produce more value than the sum of their parts. A team dynamic that fosters a sense of belonging, safety, and exploration is a dynamic that engages.

*Subfactors include:*

- Cohesion and Leadership
- Psychological Safety
- Valued Voice

## Purpose Alignment



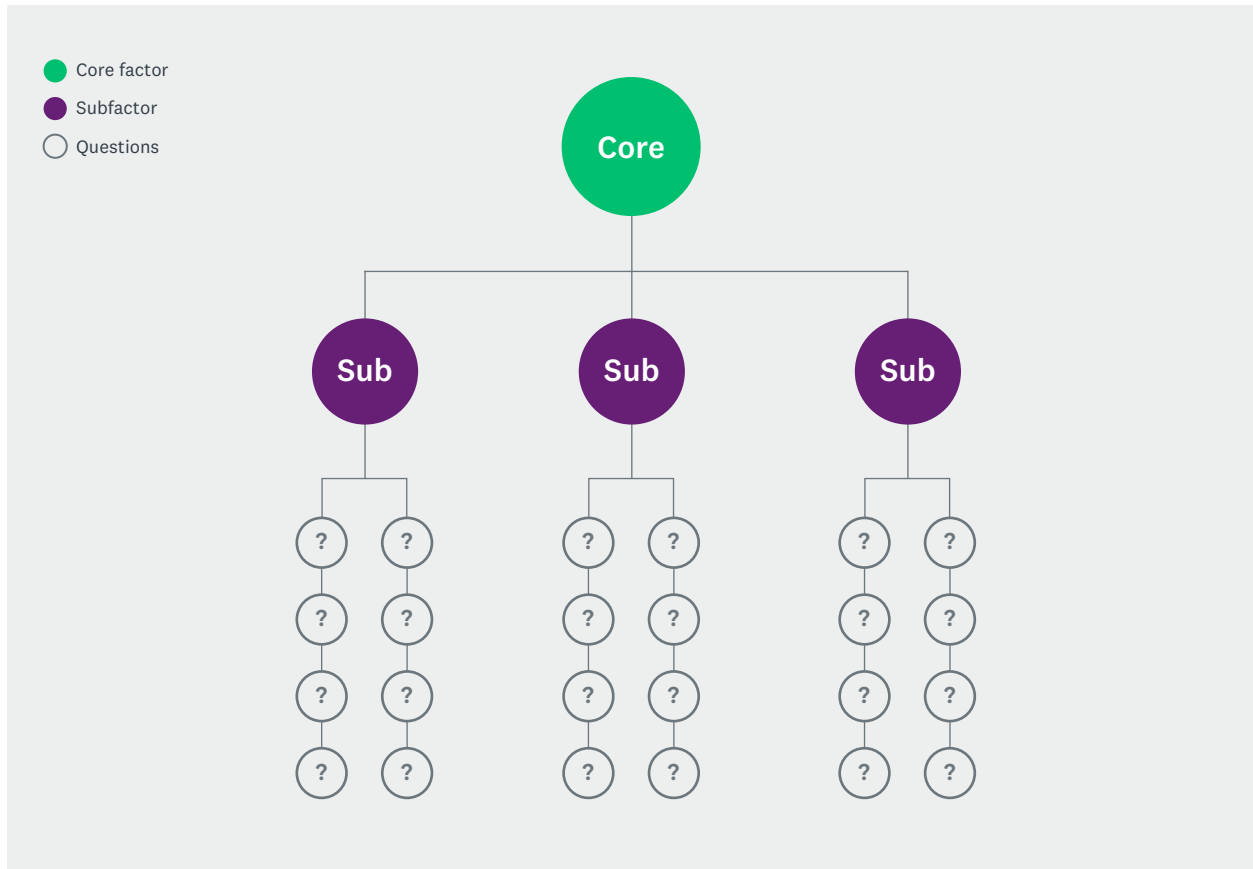
Your company needs a clearly articulated purpose and employees that are energized in pursuit of that purpose. Can they see where they fit into greater successes?

*Subfactors include:*

- Meaningful Work
- Company Purpose
- Visible Impact

## The anatomy of a Core Factor

In practice, think of the Core Factors as the building blocks of engagement. Correspondingly, each Core Factor is made up of specific and easy-to-target behaviors and needs.



### Subfactor

Each Core Factor breaks down into smaller components, which we call Subfactors. Think of these as the fundamental ideas behind each Core Factor, the most concrete and actionable areas of improvement. Subfactors group questions for you, so data can be analyzed and used in targeted action, easily.

### Required questions

Each Engage survey contains required questions that map to each Subfactor. These questions make benchmarking and trend tracking possible. Take advantage of the growing data set behind Engage and track your progress against similar companies in your industry.

## Supplemental questions

Let's say in March you'd like to know more about how employees feel regarding their work-life balance. With Engage's question bank, you can add up to eight additional questions of your choice to the appropriate survey. The question bank not only allows you to dive deeper into subjects that matter, it also allows you to expand the breadth of subjects.



## The science of questions

The questions Engage offers seek to skillfully ask about the things that matter to employees and employers most. Our research delved into the literature on everything from talent management to industrial psychology to research published by leaders in the business world. Hundreds of relevant data points were transformed into questions—questions which were then tested with a pool of 1,000 employed individuals.

Their responses were ranked and grouped to form what we call the Core Factors: the backbone of our survey program and the broadest, most important elements of the workplace relationship, as evaluated by real people.

Our research continues as Engage adds new questions and subfactors to its offerings, including our supplemental question bank. This bank is stocked with extra questions that target more specific elements of workplace satisfaction, growing as we receive feedback and new research detailing changing trends in the industry. Continued testing with fresh pools of employees from across industries ensures we provide only the topics and questions that have proven to be of importance in the engagement equation—leveraging employee powered data from start to finish.

# Designed to evolve

As the saying goes, the only thing constant is change. The Engage Method embraces the idea that “engagement” is a thing that moves across time, between generations, and alongside culture. In fact, we believe that understanding what makes your employees happy is an ongoing process that requires realignment as the years pass. The Core Factor definitions and question sets are designed to accept updates from the SurveyMonkey team seamlessly as we learn more about what’s important to employees, now. Expect new questions and topics to appear in your Engage account as we ensure you’re always a step ahead.

## Survey cadence that’s just right

Remember, your engagement program is about having a continuous conversation with your employees. We’ve set out to right-size this effort to deliver the best results for you and your people. Consider this: you want great data and your employees want a voice, so we’ve got to find the middle ground that keeps you in the know and them feeling heard and respected.

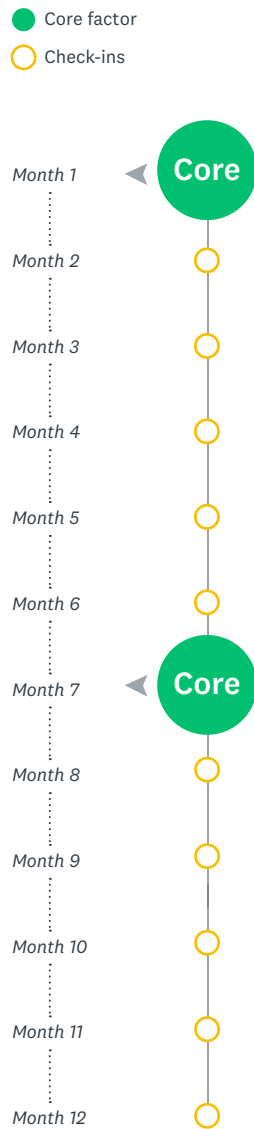
## Comparing engagement surveys

<b>Pulse survey</b>	A short survey, 1-5 questions, that runs anywhere from biweekly to multiple times per week. Focus on frequency of contact with employees. Small amounts of data trickle down to HR teams as pulses continue.
<b>Annual survey</b>	A long survey, up to 150 questions, that runs once per year. Focuses on amassing a large amount of data that is typically used by the HR team in the following year.
<b>Engage survey</b>	Engage surveys blend comprehensive Core Surveys that cover the basics twice per year with short Check-In surveys that deepen topical knowledge and keep the conversation rolling. One survey per month, 15 questions max.





## A sample year of monthly surveys



You've likely seen two types of survey programs on the market: pulse surveys and annual surveys. Pulse surveys capitalize on brevity and land in employee inboxes up to multiple times per week. Annual surveys are large, complex surveys that can contain as many as 150 questions. The problem? Pulse surveys frequently interrupt your employees and make you wait months to accumulate enough data to act on. Lengthy annual surveys exhaust survey takers, yielding incomplete or otherwise suboptimal data—all while putting the heavy burden of a yearly review on your HR team.

Engage bridges the best of both worlds with its monthly survey cadence, built around short surveys that take less than five minutes to complete. This gives you fresh data year round while ensuring your employees feel respected and energized to interact.

What's more, Engage's design prescribes a unique cadence of survey types to provide you with actionable data in your first month. The Core Survey runs in your first month and covers all Core Factors, resulting in a bird's-eye view of engagement at your company. Use this data to position for planning and highlight problem spots. The Core Survey will run every six months to ensure your broad, solid understanding and benchmarks are up to date.

What happens between those Core Surveys? Smaller surveys called Check-Ins run monthly, each digging deeper into a single Core Factor. Think of Check-Ins as the short, customizable follow-ups on what you've learned previously. With each month you have an opportunity to switch up the Check-In questions and gain a more nuanced understanding of the given topic. This means better data, discovering more opportunities for improvement, and getting one step closer to that true whole-person view of your employees.



# Conclusion

## SurveyMonkey Engage: Methodology that makes a difference

In today's business landscape, hiring and retaining the best talent for your organization demands an intelligent employee engagement strategy. In order to effectively measure and improve engagement, however, you need a framework that makes answers to your questions useful. This is where the Engage Method comes in.

The complete picture of employee engagement is vast and nuanced. To best capture its intricacies, the Engage Method breaks it down into more concrete areas that we call Core Factors—each with its own sub factors—that make it easier to ask questions, assess findings, and plan action.

As culture shifts and people continue to evolve, so will engagement. Our method embraces this idea, designing our definitions and questions sets to accept seamless updates from the team as we learn more about what's important to employees today.

Knowing the “what,” “why,” and “how” to communicate with your employees is important, but so is the “when.” SurveyMonkey Engage automatically recommends a survey cadence that lets your employees feel heard without overburdening them, all the while keeping your engagement team supplied with the fresh, actionable data they need.

**Interested in learning more? [Request a sales demo today.](#)**