





## Contents

A Little History	3
The Model	4
Leadership	5
Question Design	6
Using this document	6
Employee Experience references	8
Culture & Environment	9
Resources	10
Improving Culture & Environment	12
Measuring Culture & Environment	13
Measuring Clarity	14
Measuring Responsibility	15
Measuring Physical Environment	16
Culture & Environment references	17
Fairness & Inclusion	18
Improving Fairness & Inclusion	21
Measuring Fairness & Inclusion	22
Measuring Belonging	23
Measuring Opportunity	24
Measuring Fairness	25
Fairness & Inclusion references	26
Well-being	27
Improving well-being at work	30
Measuring Well-being	31
Measuring Support	32
Measuring Security	33
Measuring Workload	34
Well-being references	35
Engagement	36
Engagement isn't happiness or job satisfaction	39
Measuring Engagement	40
Measuring Dedication	41
Measuring Immersion	42
Measuring Energy	43
Engagement references	44
eNPS	
Using eNPS	47
Measuring eNPS	48
eNPS references	49
Question order	
Open Source	53
Contributors & thanks	54
License	55

The Employee Experience Genome Project is an opensource research project. Its core is a set of 25 questions that gather feedback on employee experience and engagement. This document describes the science and thinking.

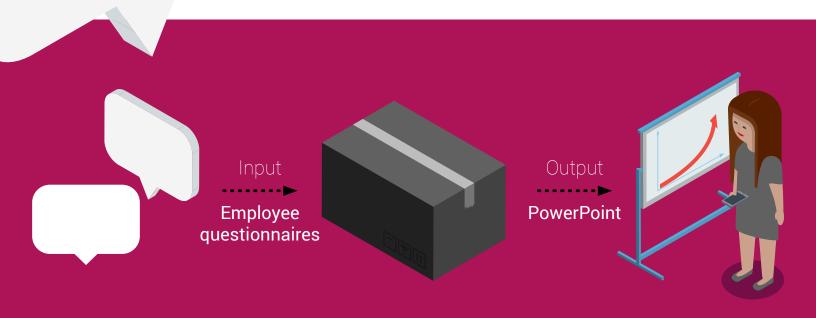
# EX Genome Project

## A Little History

The employee engagement industry has been a black box. In engineering terms, a black box is a device defined only by its input and output. Knowledge of the internal workings of a black box is not required.

The input to the employee engagement black box has been a long list of employee questions. The output has been a PowerPoint presentation to key executives. The engagement industry sells the idea that the black box is full of their secret proprietary knowledge. Employers should only be interested in the input and the output.

The purpose of the Employee Experience Genome project is to remove the black box. To uncover the science of measuring employee experience and engagement. To unlock a more transparent, more productive workplace. Then, to make that science easy for all leaders and all line managers. And for all workers.



Employee Experience is everything people encounter, observe or feel at work. Employee Engagement is the emotional commitment people have to their workplace.

## The Model

The link between experience and engagement is simple. An employee's engagement level is the outcome of their experiences at work, and more engaged employees put in more effort. Employers care about engagement because it predicts future organizational performance. So, designing a great employee experience is worthwhile. It drives results and creates a more content and productive team.

The Employee Experience Genome project breaks Employee Experience into three Realms. These realms group the experiences that most impact an employee's engagement. They are Culture and Environment, Fairness and Inclusion, and Well-being.





focus employee experience feedback on leadership behaviors. Like 'trust', or 'modeling the way'.

Yet employees are not interested in leadership behaviors. It's the outcomes of leadership that are most important to them. Things like clear objectives, fair treatment, or job security. By understanding those employee outcomes, you can infer leadership capability.

Focusing on the employee outcomes lights the path for leaders to improve. For example, if a team feels that their objectives are unclear, their leader can work on setting clearer objectives. Simple. Asking blunt questions about leadership is much more likely to just bruise egos without improvement.

## Question Design

Gathering employee feedback requires asking questions. But what if asking questions changes the very thing we are trying to understand? That's exactly what happens. And it's not a bad thing. In fact it's a huge opportunity because the questions themselves can be subtle but powerful change agents.

For example. If you ask people about safety at work, they will think about safety at work, and may act more safely. So questions need to both stimulate feedback and provide an example of desirable behavior. All questions are in very simple language. Simple language is more inclusive; it is less open to misinterpretation; and everyone reads it faster.

## The Employee Experience Genome project questions have two parts:

I feel comfortable sharing my ideas and opinions.

First, a measurement question that asks for the level of agreement with a phrase. The phrase is always a simple statement of ideal employee experience (or engagement). For example, "I feel comfortable sharing my ideas and opinions." This is used for measurement, but also reminds both managers and their teams what is expected. How might we better share new ideas and act on them?

Second, an open text question designed to stimulate conversation. Conversations on important topics helps embed those ideas in the organization. They provide opportunity for deeper dialog, which helps with relationship building. Half of these conversation starters are designed to encourage positive feedback. The other half are designed to encourage constructive criticism.

## Using this document

The Employee Experience Genome Project shows you how to unlock each of the three key realms of employee experience: Culture & Environment, Fairness & Inclusion and Wellbeing, along with Employee Engagement and eNPS. It is designed as a reference guide that:

- Introduces each realm and its relationship to employee experience
- Explains each realm's importance to leaders and workers
- · Breaks the realms into measurable parts, each with questions and conversation starters
- Gives managers and leaders practical tips for improving employee experience



"Employee feedback is more than a listening tool. It's an anchoring tool. It's a reminder of true north. Your questions should provide a normative example of how people should behave."

- James Gallman

60% of U.S. employees said their employer gave them a way to provide feedback about their own employee experience, but only 30% said their feedback was acted upon (Qualtrics)



"If we keep asking employers to solve problems, we perpetuate a system that always lets employees down. When do we say that it's up to employees to own their EX, and that the best companies will listen?"

- Laurie Ruettimann

Meaningful work is the single largest contributor to a positive employee experience (27%) (Globoforce)





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## Culture

Culture is your work community's norms, practices and behaviors. It gives people a sense of your business' purpose, values, expectations and goals.1

## Environment

Environment is the combination of the physical workspace and the tools, technology, and equipment that you provide.

We group Culture and Environment together because they are the resources\* that people need to do their jobs well. If you get Culture and Environment right you will empower your teams. Get it wrong and you will limit them.

## \*Resources

Resources has a specific meaning in this context.

#### Physical

The physical resources are easy to understand. They include job-related tools, technology and workspaces. They help your team create, innovate and feel safe.23

## Social & psychological

These resources are equally important and stem from your work culture. They include autonomy, responsibility, clear role expectations and understanding how each role fits in with the organization's mission. These help people feel connected and committed to your organization.45











Autonomy

Responsibility Expectations

Alianment

Part of leading people is ensuring that they have the resources that they need to do their jobs well.

47% of people actively looking for new positions say company culture is the main reason (Hays)

52% of HR pros cite management buy-in as the biggest barrier to strengthening culture (<u>CultureIQ</u>)

"There is not one single 'Future of Work' speaker out on the vast global conference speaking circuit touting 'Top Ten Ways to Motivate Your Lazy Unwilling-to-Work Employees!' yet that is the way many organizations behave."

- Robin Schooling

"When staff believe in company values, they feel a strong sense of engagement as they work towards a common vision. The idea of carrying out meaningful work gives them a sense of purpose, and when this aligns with their personal values, it often leads to a positive employee experience."

- Jamie Finnegan





63% of people working in pet-friendly offices "very satisfied" with their work environment (Purina)



## Improving Culture & Environment

## Encourage flexibility

Let people experiment with new ways to reach their goals. This promotes innovation and creativity. People who feel responsible and accountable for their work will put in more effort.

#### Be clear

Make sure everyone knows very clearly what's expected of them, how success is measured, and what will be rewarded. Refer to this information when you review performance.

#### Join the dots

Show people that their work matters and help them understand how they contribute to the organization's success, vision, and purpose.

## Evaluate your resources

Create a safe and accessible workplace. Make sure your culture and environment encourage people to flourish, and that nothing causes them unnecessary stress. Look at the trade-offs between the cost of the tools, technology and equipment you provide and the productivity that results.

## Measuring Culture & Environment

Having the right culture and environment empowers a team... Employees are clear on what is expected of them. They feel accountable for their own output. And they have the right tools and workspaces to do great work.



## Measuring Clarity

Vague Clear

When people know why their work matters, they have a sense of purpose and are motivated to commit to the business's vision and goals. People who have clear guidelines for success are more likely to produce work in line with those standards.

## How well do people understand their job and what you expect from them?

Q2 I understand how my work contributes to the organization's success.

Q14 I know what is expected of me and what I need to do to succeed.

#### Conversation starters

How does your work contribute to our success? How might we communicate objectives and expectations more clearly?

## Improving clarity

Sit down with your team and explain how their work helps your business succeed. Create a document with standards and expectations for all employees, and give everyone access to it.

## Measuring Responsibility

Unaccountable Accountable Accountable

Autonomy helps people cope with their job demands and allows them achieve work goals the way they feel is best. It can also reduce psychological strain and enable creativity, innovation, personal growth and development. Giving people responsibility for their work creates accountability and encourages them to make more effort.

## How accountable do people feel towards their work?

Q6 I have the freedom to do my job the way I think is best.

Q18 I feel responsible for my own performance.

#### Conversation starters

How do you get to use your own ideas? How might we give you more control over your own work?

## Improving responsibility

Give your team goals, but let them choose their own ways to get there. Include your team in discussions and decisions regarding their work. Encourage people to take moderate risks and be creative and innovative in their roles.

## Measuring Physical Environment

Restricting Enabling

Your workspace should be a safe, comfortable place that enables creativity and innovation while reducing distractions, stress and strain. Workspace design and facilities should help people do their jobs effectively, and can have a major impact on motivation and satisfaction.

## How does the work environment affect the way people do their work?

Q10 The physical workspace allows me to perform my job well.

Q22 I have the tools, technology and equipment to perform my job well.

#### Conversation starters

What things in your work environment most help you to do your job? What might help you do your job better?

## Improving the physical environment

Look at your workspace's accessibility, air quality, lighting, temperature, air conditioning, surfaces, color, noise, and distractions.

Consider both functionality and design when buying tools and equipment. Ask your team members what they need to do their work and reach their goals.

# PUNCH TODAY

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## Fairness

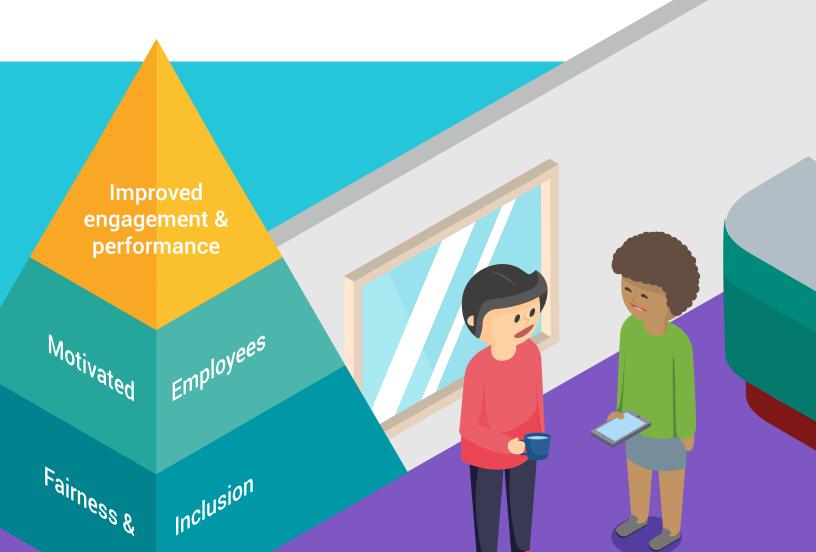
Fairness (also called organizational justice) is the extent to which people think procedures, rewards and interactions at work are unbiased.<sup>1</sup>

## Inclusion

Inclusion is how valued people feel at work, based on the way others treat them.

Fairness and Inclusion are comparative. At work, we compare how we are treated and what we experience with how others (in a similar position) are treated and what they experience.

Fairness and Inclusion is the foundation on which great employee experience is built. People who are included in decisions and given opportunities to develop will put in greater effort.<sup>2</sup> And people who are respected and have their work fairly recognized are more likely to be highly motivated. The flip side is grim. If employees think they are treated unfairly and frequently excluded, it is very hard to motivate them in other ways.



Employees who feel their voice is heard at work are 4.6 times more likely to feel empowered to perform their best work (Salesforce.com)

"As small children, we innately learn to have a sense of justice. We want things to be fair for ourselves and for those around us. What makes for an awful employee experience is when our sense of justice is thrown off by bad management decisions."

- Tim Sackett

"Let's talk inclusion. Company culture is not 'the way we do things around here' but rather the way leaders 'allow things to occur'."

- Sandy Burgham



Employees who claim their managers regularly acknowledge them for good work are 5 times more likely to stay (Qualtrics)



## Improving Fairness & Inclusion

## Eliminate bias

Make sure your procedures for decision making and rewarding performance are free from bias. Give your team access to this information.

## Build a support network

Nominate someone, or somewhere, people can go to for support if they feel they're being treated unfairly.

#### Listen

Encourage people to share their opinions and help make decisions about things that matter to them.

## Talk to your team

Have regular meetings with your team to discuss progress and outcomes. Take the opportunity to appreciate, recognize and reward people for their work.

## Measuring Fairness & Inclusion

Fairness and Inclusion is a spectrum. Getting it wrong disheartens and discourages. Getting it right creates the basis for a motivating employee experience... Employees perceive that their treatment and the distribution of rewards is fair. They have opportunities to be involved in decisions and to develop their careers. And they feel that they belong in the team.



## Measuring Belonging

Rejection Belonging

Belonging improves well-being and creates a sense of safety and purpose. People who feel safe are comfortable sharing opinions and ideas with their teams. This helps them feel like they are valued contributors, accepted and respected. According to a large study performed by Google, psychological safety is the number one predictor of high-performing teams.<sup>3</sup>

## Do people feel like they fit within their team or organization?

Q3 I feel like I am part of the team.

Q15 I feel comfortable sharing my ideas and opinions.

#### Conversation starters

What most makes you feel like part of the team? How might we better share new ideas and act on them?

## Improving belonging

Encourage your team to spend time together; hold retrospectives, team lunches and social events. Create rules around meetings so everyone feels comfortable contributing. Let everyone have a turn to talk or present, discourage people from interrupting or talking over others.

## Measuring Opportunity

Closed Inclusive

Inclusion promotes idea-sharing, collaboration, creativity, and innovation. Being included in decision-making helps people feel like they're an important part of the team. Development opportunities foster job satisfaction and can reduce the psychological strain of job demands.<sup>4</sup>

## Do people have the opportunity to develop and make decisions?

Q7 I have opportunities to help make decisions.

Q19 I have opportunities to learn and develop.

#### Conversation starters

In what ways do we include people in decision-making? How might we better help each other to learn and develop?

## Improving responsibility

Invite people to meetings and include them in communications that concern their jobs. Hold retrospectives to discuss progress and developments and encourage all team members to have a say. Budget for professional development and allow people to pursue opportunities in work time.

## Measuring Fairness

Biased Fair

Perceived fairness drives increased organizational commitment, increased job satisfaction, and good health and well-being. When an employee feels they are being unfairly treated by their supervisor they are more likely to engage in counterproductive work behaviors. These can include theft, vandalism, intentional idleness, absenteeism, employee fraud, withdrawal or exit behaviors.

## How fairly do people think they are treated and rewarded?

Q11 Compared to my co-workers, I get fair recognition for my work.

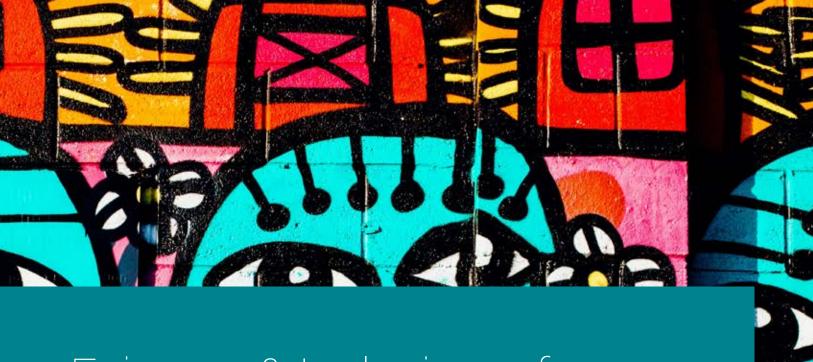
023 I am treated with respect at work.

#### Conversation starters

How do we highlight great work? How might we show each other more respect?

## Improving perceptions of fairness

Ensure that you distribute rewards fairly, especially between people in similar roles or doing similar work. Recognize people for their results, suggestions, service, achievements, effort, or extra-role behaviors. Treat people respectfully and thoughtfully; don't gossip, spread rumors or disclose confidential information.



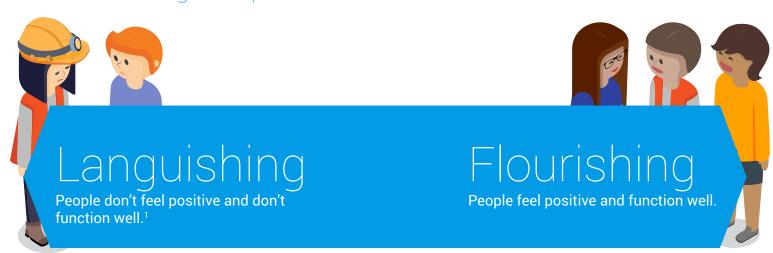
## Fairness & Inclusion references

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Well-being refers to the psychological functioning of people in the workplace. A common mistake is to think of it as a mental illness issue. But the presence of illness is not the same as an absence of positive well-being. Well-being is important to all workers.

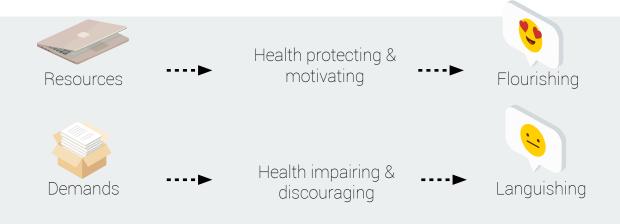


Wellbeing is best described as a spectrum. Languishing workers are on the left and flourishing on the right. The aim of great employee experience design is to move everybody to the right. People who are neither languishing or flourishing also need support to flourish and feel engaged.

In the section on Culture and Environment, we introduced the idea of resources. Resources are the physical, social and psychological tools people use to cope with the demands of work.

The core of work-related well-being is helping employees balance work demands with work resources. For example, being cheerful even when they're having a bad day is a common demand of a call center operator. Knowing that their boss has their back is a resource that balances this.

A good balance between resources and demands promotes flourishing, while not having enough resources to cope with demands can cause people anxiety, burnout or stress. When people are flourishing they are up to 30% more productive,<sup>2</sup> take fewer sick days,<sup>34</sup> are more creative and innovative,<sup>567</sup> and exhibit fewer exit behaviors.



"Employee wellness is ultimately a performance capacity issue. When employees are unwell physically, mentally, emotionally, or otherwise; they simply can't be their best. Their performance is limited before they even show up to work. Wellness is how you unlock each employee's full potential to perform." - Jason Lauritsen

Employees who say their manager consistently helps them manage their workload reported they were eight times as likely to stay with their current employer. (Qualtrics)



"If we want the best of people, we need to give them our best even when we're not at our best. Apologies work, saying I'm sorry works, listening when to others when they're not having a great day works. Turns out, empathy works."

- William Tincup

Two-thirds of workers believe their job is having a significant impact on their mental and behavioral health.

(Mental Health America)



## Improving well-being at work

#### Be supportive

Make support resources freely available. Make sure your team knows where to go and who to talk to if they need help at work.

## Talk with your team

Check in with your team regularly to see how they're feeling. Do they have a good work-life balance? Do they feel safe at work and secure in their role? Are they coping with their workload?

## Be healthy

Promote positive behaviors: provide healthy snacks and drinks, allow gym time, don't put heavy demands on people outside office hours.

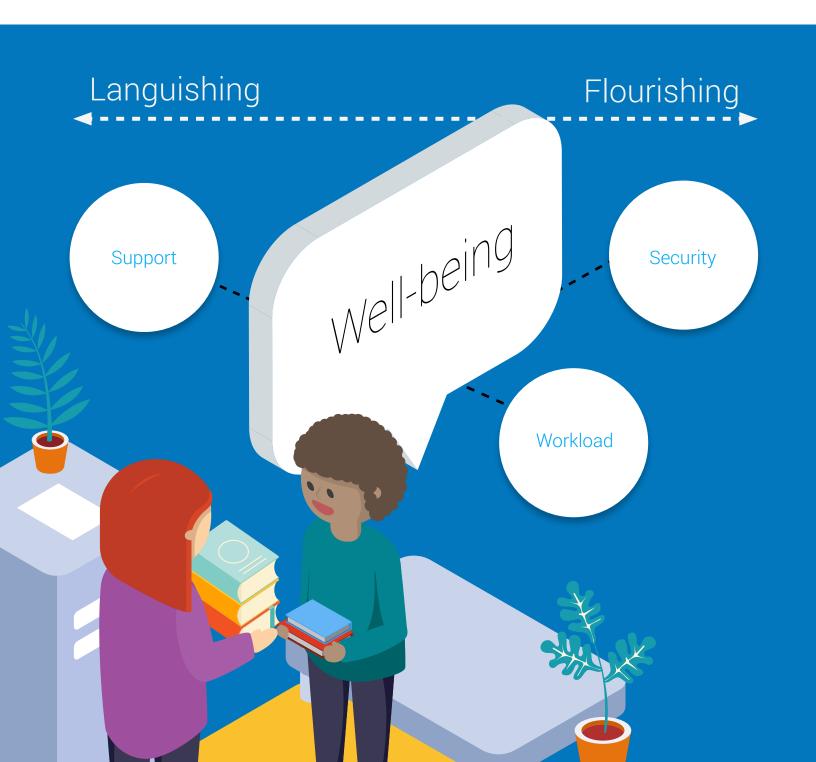
#### Give feedback

Give people regular feedback on their performance and show appreciation for their work. Make sure they're being treated fairly and can contribute to things that matter to them.



## Measuring Well-being

A team with great well-being flourishes. People know where to get support. They feel secure in their jobs and safe in their work. And they can manage their workload in balance with their life.8



## Measuring Support

Unsupported Supported

Support helps people cope with their work demands and achieve their goals. It also enables personal growth and development.

## Do people feel supported at work?

Q4 Someone at work cares about my well-being.

Q16 I know where to get support when I need it.

#### Conversation starters

How do we look out for each other? How might we better support each other?

## Improving support

Document your support contacts and procedures, and give this information to people when they start working for you. Make sure the document is kept up to date and is available to everyone at all times.

## Measuring Security

Insecure Secure

When people feel secure in their jobs they'll be able to cope with work demands and achieve their goals. If people feel unsafe at work they are more likely to be stressed, anxious, exhausted or burned out.

## How secure do people feel in their jobs?

Q8 I feel confident about my future here.

Q20 I feel safe at work.

#### Conversation starters

What thoughts do you have about your future here? How might we make work a safer place?

## Improving security

Be open with your team about job stability and explain any reasons their role may be at risk. Review your workspace for risks and hazards. Correct any safety concerns.

## Measuring Workload

Stressful Balanced

When there's a good balance between work demands and other aspects of peoples' lives, they can enjoy work while also enjoying the other things they love. A workload imbalance negatively affects people at work and home, causing stress, anxiety, exhaustion, illness, and burnout.

## Do people feel like their workload is reasonable and balanced?

Q12 I am satisfied with the balance between work and other aspects of my life.

Q24 My workload is fair and manageable.

#### Conversation starters

What helps you balance your work and other aspects of your life? How might we better support people to manage their workloads?

## Improving workload

Don't expect people to work or be on call outside work hours or on weekends.

Consider flexible working hours and arrangements: let people work from home if their job allows it.

Make it safe for people to say no to new requests if they're already working at full capacity.



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Employee engagement is a measure of the emotional commitment people have to your business and its goals. Simply, engaged employees care about their work and their company and are more likely to do all the things that make your business great - from serving customers to inventing new products...everything!

An engaged workforce drives business performance



"Engagement is not just an outcome but a precursor to many important business measures: performance, work-related wellbeing, productivity, job satisfaction, and absenteeism to name a few".

- Laura-Jane Booker



Teams that address engagement needs in their everyday work outperform bottom teams by an average 20% in sales and 10% in customer engagement (Gallup)

"Highly engaged employees are your number one strategic advantage, not easily replicated and often underestimated."

- Samantha Gadd

Disengaged employees cost organizations between \$450 and \$550 billion annually (The Engagement Institute)





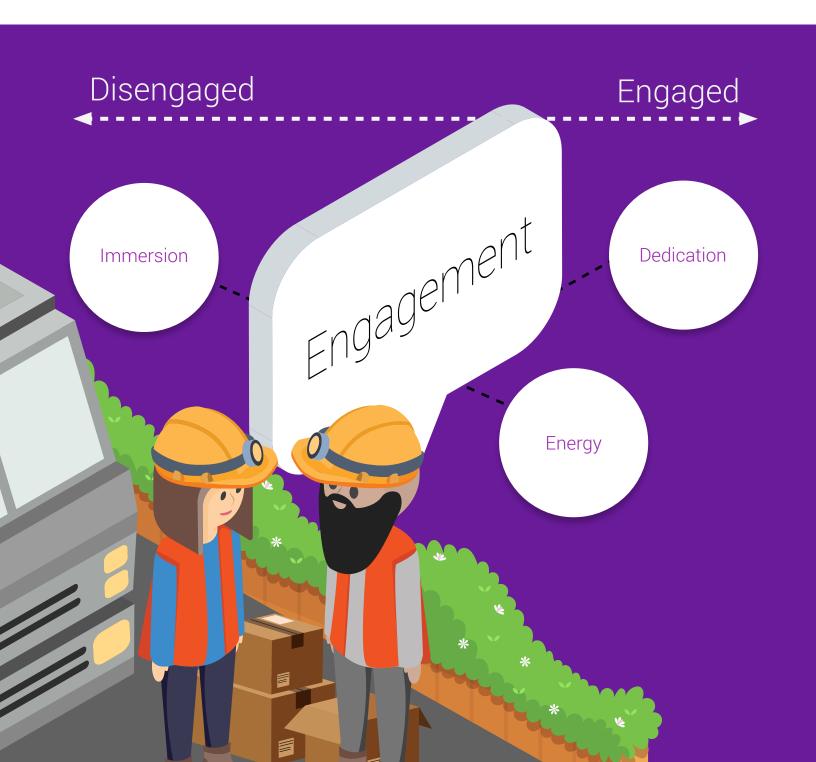
## Engagement isn't happiness or job satisfaction

Engagement is persistent; it takes more than one bad or good day to change how engaged someone is in their work. Think of an engaged employee like a dedicated sports fan. They'll be disappointed if their team loses, but they won't stop being a fan. An engaged employee will still be committed to their job and your business even if they have a bad day. But if every day is bad, even the most engaged employee will stop being a fan...

How do we improve engagement? By improving the things we can directly influence: culture, environment, fairness, inclusion and wellbeing.

#### Measuring Engagement

The engagement questions are based on items from the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale.<sup>123</sup> To measure employee engagement we look at immersion, dedication, and energy.



#### Measuring Dedication

Cynical Dedicated

How committed are people to their work?

Q1 I am proud of the work that I do.

Q13 My job inspires me.

#### Conversation starters

What are you most proud of in your work? What do you find inspiring in your job?

#### Measuring Immersion

Distracted Engrossed

How interested are people in their work?

Q5 I feel happy when I am working hard.

Q17 Time passes quickly when I am working.

#### Conversation starters

What do you like most about working here? What parts of your work do you find most interesting?

#### Measuring Energy

Exhausted Energized

How energized do people feel at work?

Q9 I feel full of energy at work.

Q21 I stay energetic even when things are difficult at work.

#### Conversation starters

What most affects your energy levels at work? What motivates you to go above and beyond at work?



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Employee NPS (eNPS) is based on Net Promoter Score® (NPS™) by Bain & Company, Satmetrix Systems, Inc., and Fred Reichheld.¹ It is a quick indicator of employee engagement, because people who are engaged and loyal are more likely to recommend your business to others.

NPS measures customer loyalty with a single question: 'How likely are you to recommend this company to a friend or relative?' Loyal customers will put their reputation on the line to recommend your company.

NPS uses a 0-10 scale, and people are categorized according to how they score.

9-10 are promoters. These are the people who will enthusiastically recommend your business to others.

7-8 are passives. These people are neither negative nor loyal.

0-6 are detractors. These people would not recommend your business to others, and may encourage people to avoid your business.

#### The Promoter Flywheel



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IBES

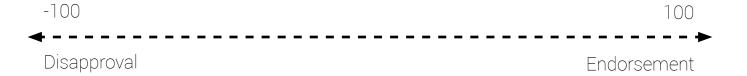
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### Using eNPS

eNPS is measured frequently (e.g. monthly/quarterly) and gives you a sense of the experience people are having at work. People who have positive work experiences are more likely to be engaged, and are more likely to share their enthusiasm with co-workers, customers and friends.

eNPS asks how likely you are to recommend your company as a place to work, and uses the same scoring system as NPS. The overall eNPS is calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors from promoters. The passives have no influence.

#### Measuring eNPS



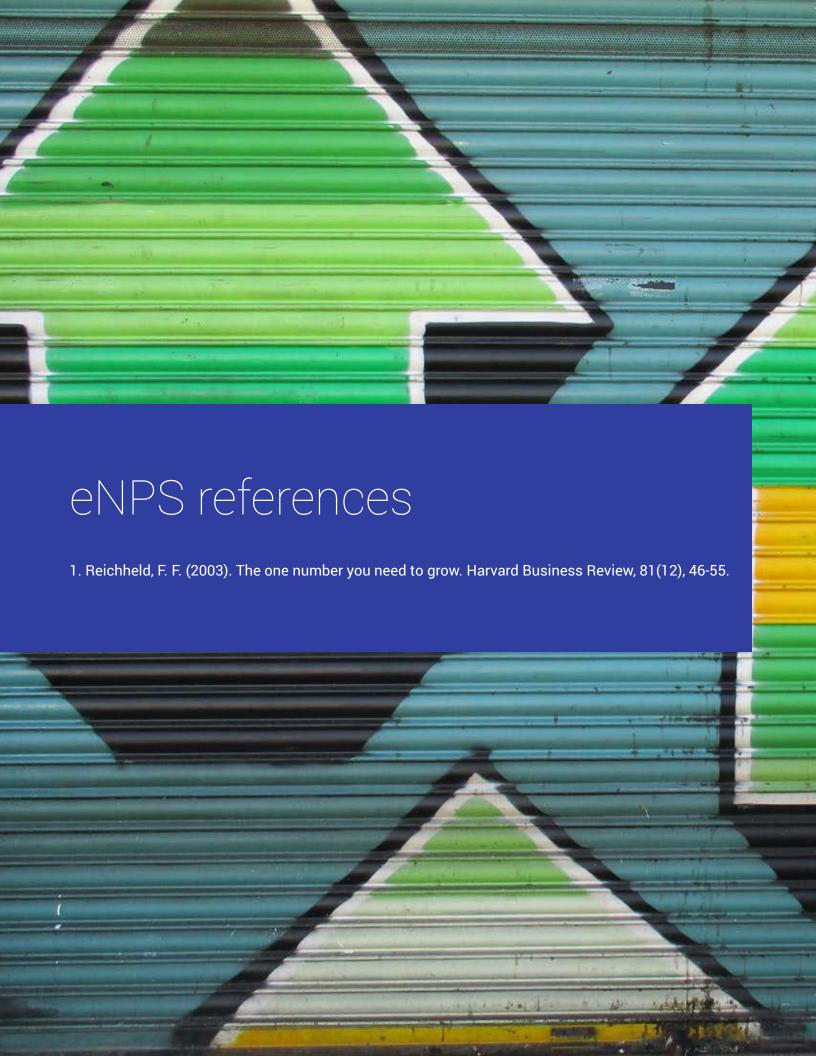
Your team members will sit somewhere between endorsing your business as a place to work, and disapproving of it. Your total eNPS score comes from subtracting the number of detractors from promoters. This number is expressed as a percentage: the maximum score is 100% (all promoters, no detractors) and minimum score is -100% (all detractors, no promoters).

ENPS

How likely would you be to recommend working here?

Conversation starters

Anything on your mind that you'd like to share?





There are 25 questions total: 1 for eNPS and 6 questions for each of the 4 realms: Culture & Environment, Fairness & Inclusion, Well-being and Engagement

For baseline surveys, the full 25 questions are an acceptable load. For employee feedback we recommend sending one question per week; the full question set twice per year.

Send one question from each realm per month, so every month you get a general sense of how employees feel about the realms.

Every realm has three sub-realms, each of which has two questions that are highly correlated. Ask these two questions 12 weeks apart so that you can track changes over time.

Label	Item	Realm	Sub-realm
Q1	I am proud of the work that I do.	Engagement	Dedication
Q2	I understand how my work contributes to the success of our organization.	Culture and Environment	Clarity
Q3	I feel like I am part of the team.	Fairness and Inclusion	Belonging
Q4	Someone at work cares about my well-being.	Well-being	Support
Q5	I feel happy when I am working hard.	Engagement	Immersion
Q6	I have the freedom to do my job the way I think is best.	Culture and Environment	Responsibility
Q7	I have opportunities to help make decisions.	Fairness and Inclusion	Opportunity
Q8	I feel confident about my future here.	Well-being	Security
Q9	I feel full of energy at work.	Engagement	Energy
Q10	The physical workspace allows me to perform my job well.	Culture and Environment	Physical Environment
Q11	Compared with my co-workers, I get fair recognition for my work.	Fairness and Inclusion	Fairness
Q12	I am satisfied with the balance between work and other aspects of my life.	Well-being	Workload

Label	Item	Realm	Sub-realm
Q13	My job inspires me.	Engagement	Dedication
Q14	I know what is expected of me and what I need to do to succeed.	Culture and Environment	Clarity
Q15	I feel comfortable sharing my ideas and opinions.	Fairness and Inclusion	Belonging
Q16	I know where to get support when I need it.	Well-being	Support
Q17	Time passes quickly when I am working.	Engagement	Immersion
Q18	I feel responsible for my own performance.	Culture and Environment	Responsibility
Q19	I have opportunities to learn and develop.	Fairness and Inclusion	Opportunity
Q20	I feel safe at work.	Well-being	Security
Q21	I stay energetic even when things are difficult at work.	Engagement	Energy
Q22	I have the tools, technology, and equipment to perform my job well.	Culture and Environment	Physical Environment
Q23	I am treated with respect at work.	Fairness and Inclusion	Fairness
Q24	My workload is fair and manageable.	Well-being	Workload
eNPS	How likely would you be to recommend working here?	eNPS	Organization





## Open Source

The project has included a comprehensive review of the existing literature on employee engagement and employee experience. There has been original research on leadership, organizational justice and work-related well-being. Input has come from practitioners, academics and thought leaders from around the globe. There have been focus groups of workers and employers.

Rather than keeping the conclusions of all that work proprietary, the project goal was to opensource the science.

The open source concept comes from the computer software field. It describes projects where the originator provides rights to study, change and distribute the intellectual property to anyone for any purpose. It implies that the project is developed in a collaborative and public manner. The Employee Experience Genome project uses this same approach. It began as an open source project in 2017 so it's already benefited from 18 months of wide use, peer review and collaborative development. Everyone is encouraged to use this resource and contribute to it at <a href="https://github.com/joyouslabs/">https://github.com/joyouslabs/</a>

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