



Summary: An engaged employee can be a competitive advantage

Conclusion: Employee engagement is a popular concept among organizations due to its relationship with employee performance and business results. The meaning and measurement of employee engagement, however, is not well defined and the authors present a model to help researchers and practitioners better understand this important construct.

Reference: **The Meaning of Employee Engagement** by W. H. Macey & B. Schneider, *Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice*, February 2007. Reprints available from the Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology, www.siop.org For more information, contact Kevin Impelman at kimpelman@batrushollweg.com

Why this Article is Important: Many organizations conduct employee surveys to gauge the level of engagement in their workforce. This data is used to develop initiatives to raise engagement and morale across the organization. Despite the widespread use of these surveys, researchers and practitioners have an unclear definition of engagement. Furthermore, engagement is often measured in multiple ways, such as conditions for engagement (e.g., satisfaction with leadership), behaviors resulting from engagement, and general employee opinions. This lack of understanding can lead to faulty measurement and inappropriate strategies to raise the engagement and subsequent performance of its employees.

Major Findings: The authors present engagement as a multidimensional construct that encompasses the following (see Figure 1 also):

- **Organizational conditions** represent the situational or environmental factors that can lead to an employee's enthusiasm towards their job. These conditions can include leadership, work design, relationships with co-workers, challenge or autonomy with work, and understanding organizational values. These are all conditions that should facilitate engagement, but do not define engagement itself.
- **Trait engagement** refers to personality traits or stable attitudes that predispose someone to be more likely to be engaged.
- **State engagement** entails temporary feelings of passion, energy, enthusiasm, and activation. This element of engagement entails aspects of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job involvement.
- **Behavioral engagement** follows from state engagement, and involves adaptive responses to organizational challenges, such as doing more than what needs to be done.

What does it mean to you?

- a. Having engaged employees can be a key competitive advantage to your organization.
- b. Identify what aspect of engagement you want to measure before constructing an employee survey.
- c. Have a good understanding of what your employee engagement survey measures so that you move forward on the right initiatives.

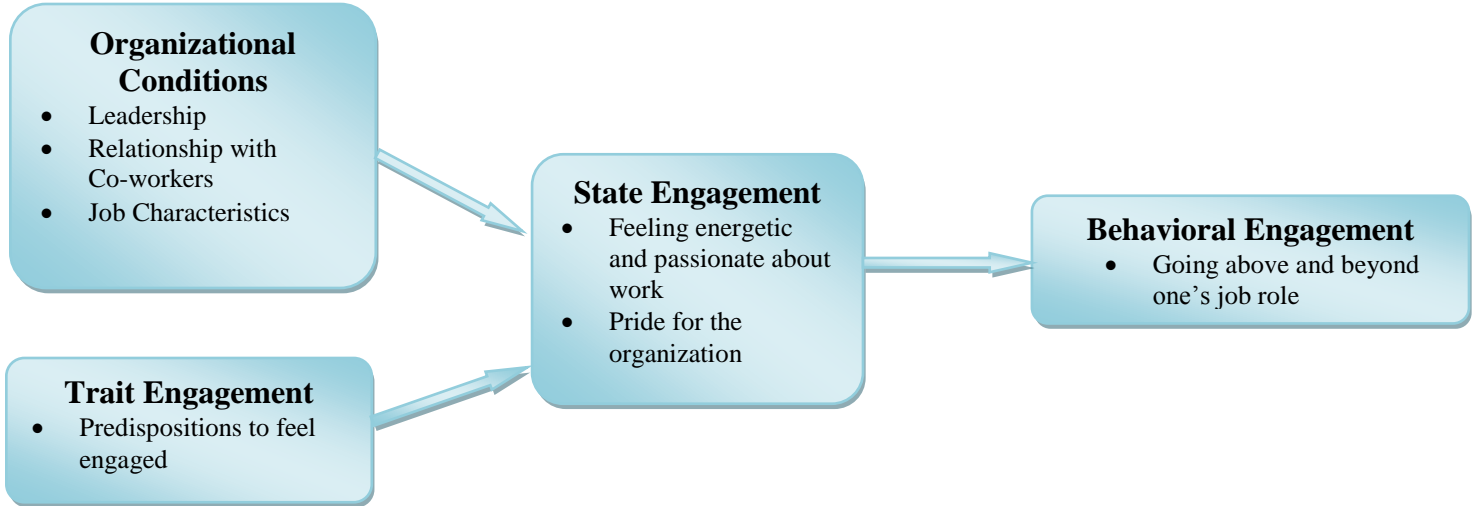


Figure 1. Framework of Employee Engagement