

10 TOP EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IDEAS

Show your people they
matter, every single day



workvivo
by zoom



Highly engaged employees
make the customer experience.
Disengaged employees break it."

Timothy R. Clark



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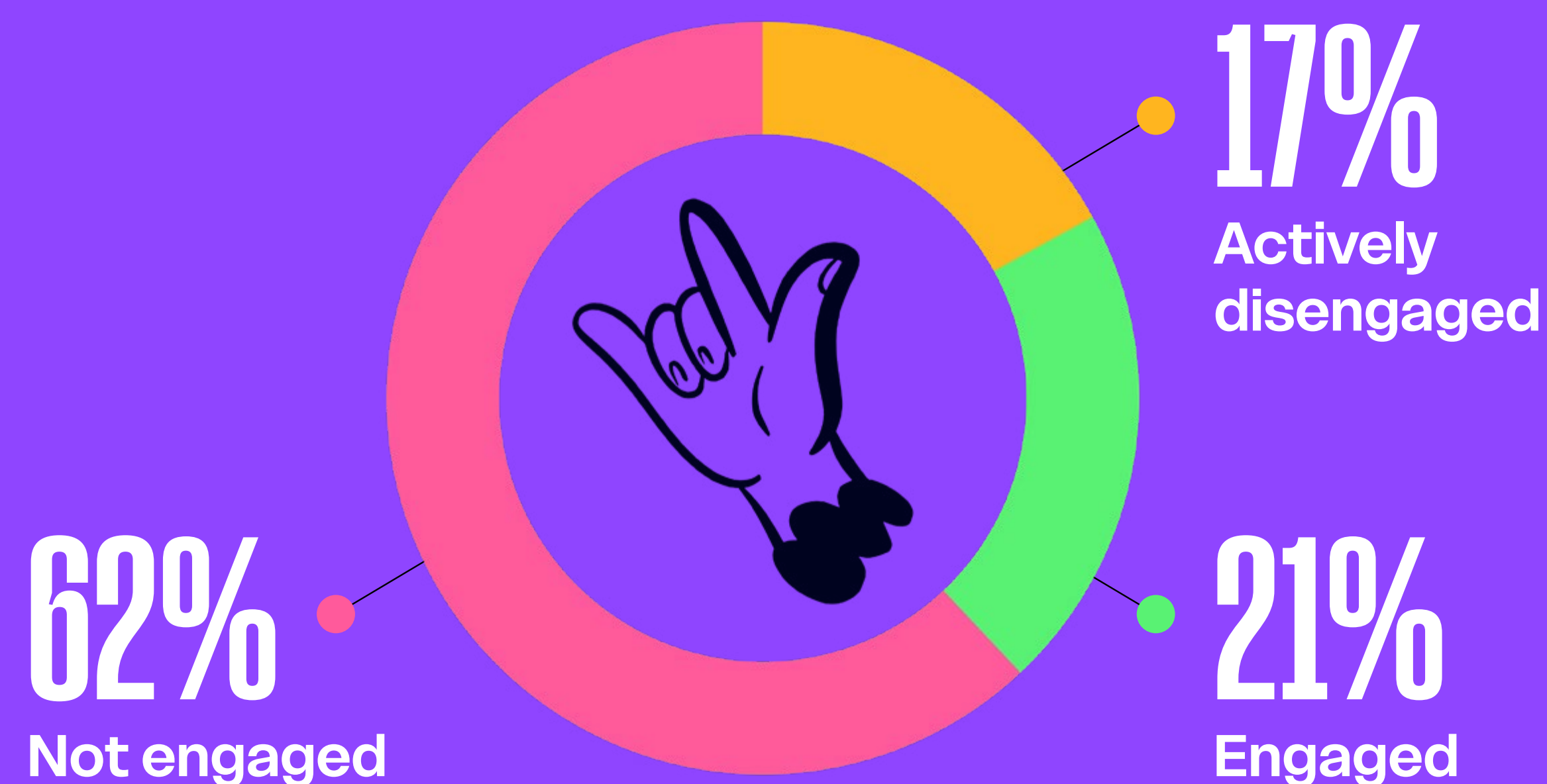
INTRODUCTION



Employee engagement is not optional

Here's a tough truth: **only 21% of employees worldwide feel truly engaged**, according to [Gallup's 2025 State of the Global Workplace report](#). That's down from 23% in 2023, putting us right back where we were in the darkest days of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Closer to home, engagement in [North America is at a 10-year low](#). Today, only 31% of employees report being engaged, while 62% are simply clocking in but zoning out. And 17% are actively disengaged, dragging morale and performance down with them.



Now, let's talk about cost. It's not just a headache for HR anymore, it's a bottom-line disaster. Gallup's report puts the global price tag of disengagement at a staggering \$438 billion in lost productivity in 2024 alone.

Let's take a deep breath. Here's the part every leader should circle in red: **engagement is fixable**. The same Gallup research shows that if every company around the world were fully engaged, it could unlock \$9.6 trillion (yes, trillion). That's not just good for business, but for people and communities.

Of course, no one expects to go from 21% to 100% overnight. Forward-thinking companies are taking small, consistent actions (like clear goals, listening, fair pay, and a healthy work environment) to boost engagement. When people feel seen, heard, and supported, they stay longer, work smarter, and care more.



That's what this guide is all about. In it, you'll find 10 top ideas to help you push past the gloomy stats and transform your employee engagement.



USE "IF-THEN" FOR SIMPLE WORK

Motivating employees with rewards is only possible when work is straightforward and repeatable. For example, entering data, answering customer calls, and running an assembly line. For these types of jobs, you should only use the "If you do X, you'll get Y" method.

For example:

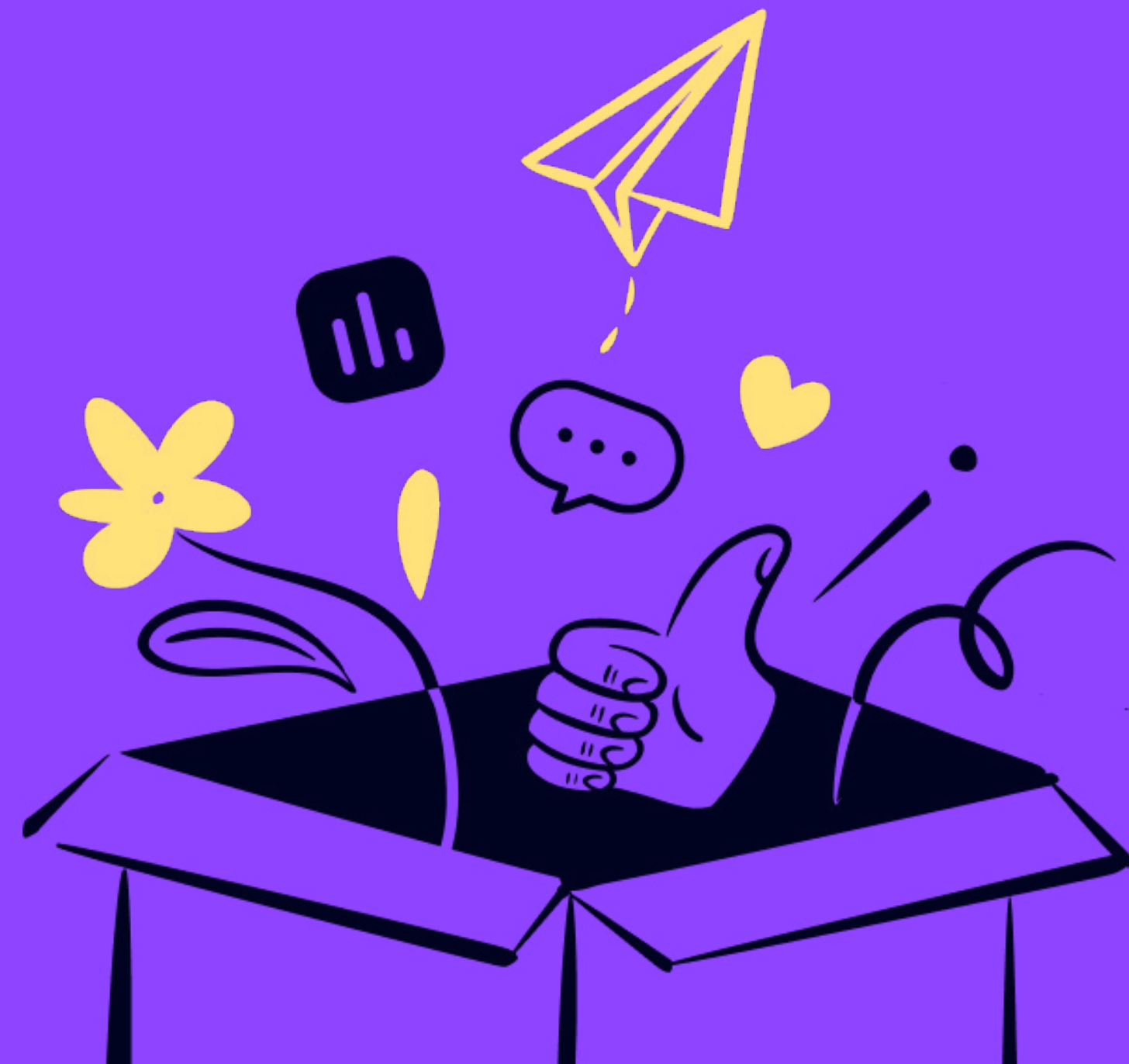


"If you close 50 tickets this week, you get a bonus day off."

This carrot-and-stick approach works because the task is simple and measurable. Employees know exactly what to do ("do X") and exactly what they'll get ("then Y") when it's done.

It's no secret that this works; a [study by the Intensive Research Foundation \(IRF\)](#) revealed that **financial incentives boost performance in mechanical tasks by as much as 44%**. So, leveraging this "if-then" tactic removes ambiguity and lets people focus on execution.





HOW TO SET UP AN IF-THEN REWARD SYSTEM THAT WORKS

01



Pick a simple task

Choose an easy, measurable task.

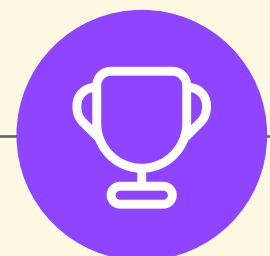
02



Set a clear goal

Make the target and deadline clear for everyone.

03



Pick a reward that matters

Offer something people actually want: cash, time off, or vouchers.

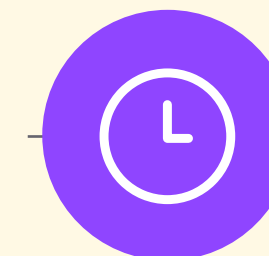
04



Communicate it

Tell everyone how it works.

05



Deliver the incentive fast

Reward people immediately when they hit the target.

THE TAKEAWAY



When the work is simple, "if-then" is an easy win for everyone. So keep it clear, fair, and worthwhile for employees. Before long, you'll see motivation skyrocket.



USE SELF-DIRECTION FOR COMPLEX WORK

Employee engagement thrives on self-direction. It's the difference between telling people exactly how to do something versus trusting them to figure out the best way to accomplish it. When you think about it, certain aspects of the job require problem-solving, innovation, or teamwork.

For example:

- ☆ Designing a new product.
 - 👍 Troubleshooting a tricky customer issue.
 - ⚡ Planning the next quarter's big marketing push.
-

These are not simple tasks. They need fresh thinking, collaboration, and ownership.



Why self-direction works

People do their best work when they feel the work is theirs. They'll care more, think bigger, and push further — not because you told them to, but because they want to. [Gallup's article on employee engagement](#) says it loud and clear: **highly engaged employees are far more likely to take initiative and go beyond what's expected.**

When you give people ownership, you unlock intrinsic motivation: that inner drive to solve problems and make a real impact.

What self-direction can look like in real life

Instead of handing people a rigid to-do list, give them adequate direction. Try saying:

- “Here's the challenge. Here are the goals. I trust you, tell me how you'd tackle this.”
- “Do your best work, and use whatever tools or help you need. Let's check in along the way.”

When people feel trusted, they'll surprise you with solutions you may never have unearthed yourself.

So, how do you put this idea into action?

- 01** • **Involve people early:** Bring your team into the planning and decision-making phase as soon as possible.
- 02** • **Ask for their ideas:** Don't be the only one with all the answers. Ask your people how they'd solve it.
- 03** • **Set clear goals (not instructions):** Be crystal clear on what the outcome (or success) should look like, but leave the “how” to them.
- 04** • **Show support:** Check in regularly and offer help when needed. Just don't hover over every step.
- 05** • **Celebrate initiative:** When your team owns the project and achieves success, recognize their efforts. This opens the door for their collaborative spirits.

THE TAKEAWAY

If you want your people to care deeply about their jobs, give them space, trust, and support. This is smart leadership; when you get it right, your team won't just do the work — they'll own it.



GET PEOPLE TO ENGAGE, NOT TO COMPLY

Nobody wakes up excited to comply. Rules and checklists keep a company running, but they don't make people care.

You see, traditional management loves the word "compliance" — that is, making sure people follow policies, stick to the script, and hit quotas. But, if you want people to show up with real energy and fresh ideas, you've got to think bigger than just, "Did they do what I said?"

Engagement versus compliance

Engagement is a whole different ball game. It means people want to do great work because they see the bigger picture, feel trusted, and know their voice matters.

A good way to think about it is:



Compliance:
"Do this because I said so."



Engagement:
"Let's solve this together; your ideas matter."

This shift — from telling to involving — makes workers feel their ideas count. And the proof is in the numbers: [McKinsey research](#) shows that employees whose managers focus on their performance are 4.2 times more likely to stay and outperform their peers. Now, that's a huge return for simply caring.



How to make this happen

Let's flip the switch from "do what you're told" to "own what you do".

- 01 • **Show the "why" behind the work:** Don't just hand people a task list. Connect it to the bigger mission: "We're asking you to do this because it helps us hit [important company goal]."
- 02 • **Make space for ideas:** Let your people share thoughts in meetings or on your employee experience platform (like Workvivo).
- 03 • **Shine a spotlight:** If someone suggests a brilliant idea or improvement, give them a shoutout in your next team catch-up. You can even post it on your company feed for everyone to see.
- 04 • **Act on what they share:** Nothing kills engagement faster than asking for ideas and then ignoring them. If someone's idea is achievable, do it. Otherwise, explain why you can't; people respect honesty.

THE TAKEAWAY

At the end of the day, remember that people want to feel useful, heard, and part of something bigger than their job description. When you build a culture of involvement rather than just compliance, it helps staff feel valued and engaged in their work.



TURN WORK INTO MANAGEABLE TASKS

Unclear projects can feel overwhelming, leading to procrastination and low motivation.

When you chop a big task into small, clear actions, it becomes easier to get motivated. And that builds momentum. Remember the “if-then” strategy? It works great here. Every little milestone becomes a clear opportunity to celebrate progress and keep motivation high.

Let’s use an example: Your marketing team is preparing to launch a new campaign next month. That’s quite a big goal. **Break it down into clear, manageable tasks:**

- ★ Write three social posts.
- ★ Design visuals for each post.
- ★ Schedule the ads.
- ★ Monitor comments and feedback.



Now, each milestone is small enough to tackle right away – and easy to reward.



Why does this work?

A [2023 study by Schweitzer, Kang, and Daniels](#) revealed that people are far more likely to quit when they receive a series of difficult assignments in a row. However, they noted that breaking them up with easier tasks dramatically reduces the likelihood of quitting and burnout.

So, how do you break down work into manageable parts? Here's a simple flow to follow:

- 01 Start with the goal:** Write a clear statement of the final objective.
- 02 List all the subtasks:** Brainstorm all component actions needed to reach that goal.
- 03 Put them in order:** Figure out what goal has to happen first and what can run side-by-side with another.
- 04 Assign owners and deadlines:** Give each task to a person or team with clear due dates.
- 05 Celebrate each step:** Every finished milestone is a miniature win. It can be public recognition or a brief celebration.

THE TAKEAWAY

When work is broken down into doable tasks, people feel motivated. Make it easy to win a little every day and watch that energy build all the way to the finish line.



PAY YOUR EMPLOYEES WELL

Good culture and perks won't make up for low pay. If you're underpaying your employees, you'll struggle to keep them motivated and may even struggle to retain them.

It won't take long for them to notice and quietly start updating their resumes. And when a worker leaves, you don't just lose talent; replacing them can cost way more than giving them a fair raise in the first place.



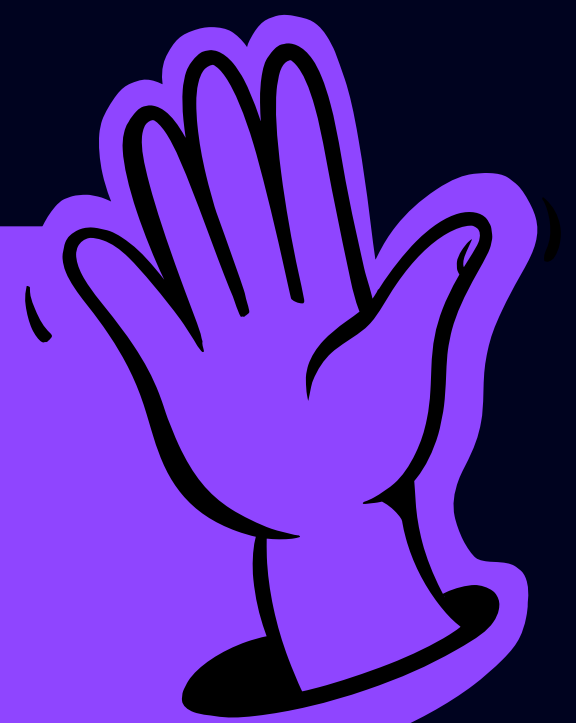
A real-world example to consider

An interesting case study that comes to mind is Starbucks. When the company raised its average US hourly wage to \$18, it didn't just make headlines; it positively impacted annual turnover, which dropped by around 10% across its US stores.

When workers feel valued financially, they're more likely to invest effort and stick around. On the other hand, if they find they can earn more doing the same job elsewhere, engagement naturally drops. That's why you must ensure salaries and benefits are competitive in your industry and region. Even small pay increases or bonuses for high performers can boost loyalty.

THE TAKEAWAY

Being a good payer is an investment in stability and loyalty. Get it right, and you'll spend less time replacing people and more time helping them do their best work.



FIND OUT EACH EMPLOYEE'S PASSION

How can you show people they truly matter if you don't really know them? The truth is, everyone wants to feel seen — not just as a worker, but as a whole person with dreams, interests, and hidden talents waiting to shine.

Invest in finding out what lights people up. Ask them:

- Q What gets you out of bed in the morning?
- Q What do you love working on?
- Q What do you want more of in your day-to-day?

When you know this, you can help connect their personal spark with the bigger mission of your company. And that's when real engagement starts to grow.

A [Conference Board survey \(2023\)](#) found that work-life balance, interesting work, and culture are three of the biggest drivers of job satisfaction today. It makes sense: when people get to do work they care about, in an environment that supports them, they stick around and give their best.

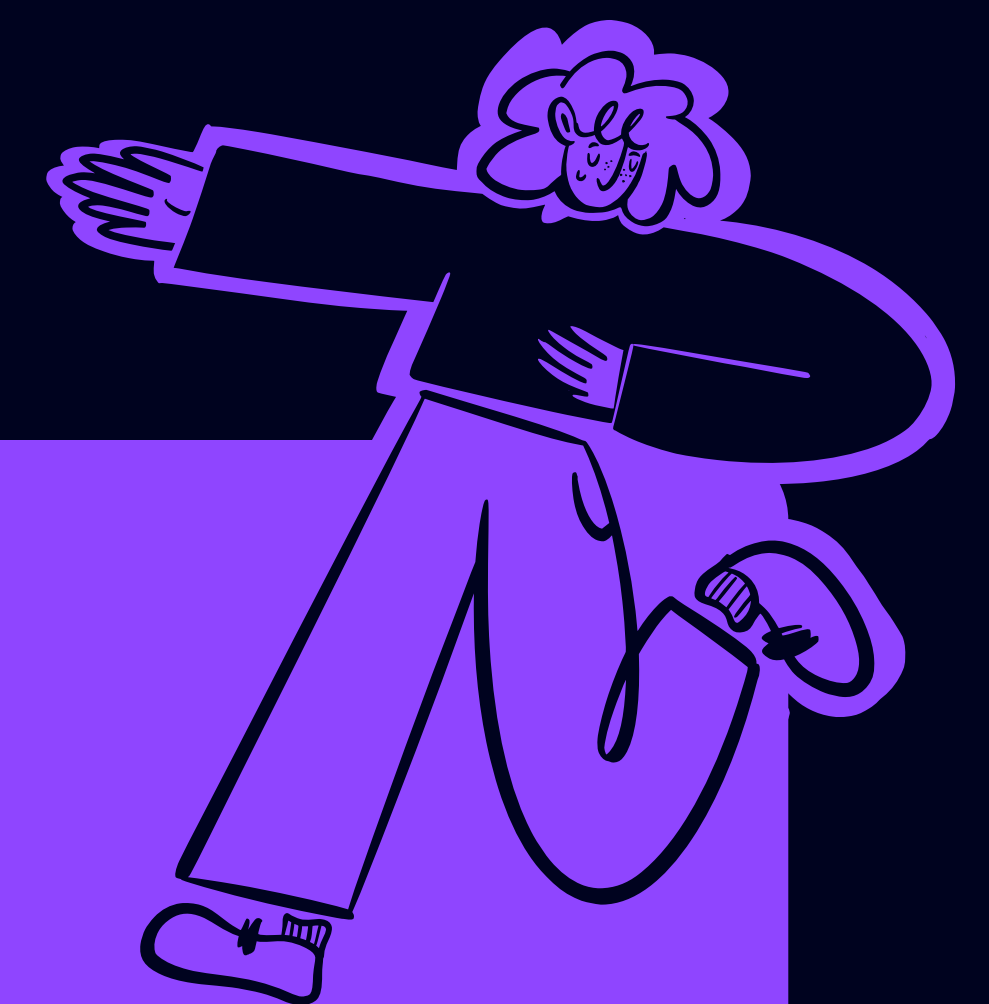




A tip you can try: hold a quarterly “passion chat” with each team member. Ask them:

- Q What are you excited about right now?
- Q What skills would you love to have?
- Q What project do you wish to jump on?

See where you can align their answers with your team goals. When you take the time to find out what matters to people, you’ll discover hidden strengths, fresh ideas, and maybe even a spark that lifts everyone a little higher.



THE TAKEAWAY

Discover what makes each person tick, then help them connect it to their work. You’ll build trust, loyalty, and an energy that no paycheck alone can buy.



BE A MENTOR, NOT A BOSS



No one wants a boss breathing down their neck all day. People need leaders who listen, coach, and genuinely care about their growth.

Good leaders grow people

Being a boss isn't about barking orders; it's about helping people grow, listening to them, and giving them freedom to succeed. In fact, a [2023 Forbes piece](#) highlighted how mentoring delivers powerful results in today's workplace. It further noted that mentored employees report higher job engagement and deeper emotional investment in their work.



So, if you want to build a workplace where people feel seen, supported, and ready to do their best, try these:



Coach regularly: Set aside time for real one-on-one chats. Ask about challenges, goals, and what skills they'd love to build next.



Listen with care: Sometimes people don't need answers; they just want to be heard. Be that safe space.



Help solve roadblocks: If they're stuck, roll up your sleeves and help them find solutions or new resources.



Skip the hierarchy sometimes: Hold regular "skip-level" chats. Here, employees talk directly with senior leaders. These open conversations help everyone feel heard.

THE TAKEAWAY

When managers present themselves as mentors, employees feel cared for. Workers will remember you as the person who's not just interested in results, but someone who believed in them and invested in their success.



EMPHASIZE EMPLOYEE SAFETY

When employees feel unsafe or unsupported, productivity and morale take a nosedive. But when people trust that you care about their well-being, they're far more likely to stay engaged and do their best work.

Put physical safety first

Start with the basics: ensure everyone has the necessary tools, protective gear, and training to perform their jobs safely. If someone is lifting boxes all day, they need proper equipment. If they spend hours at a desk, invest in ergonomic furniture to protect their posture and overall health.

In addition, use onboarding as your first line of defense. New hires should get clear, practical safety training — not just a dusty manual, but hands-on instructions they'll actually remember.

Don't overlook psychological safety

Equally important is making sure people feel safe speaking up. Employees should never be afraid to share an idea, raise a concern, or admit when something's not working.

Tools like Workvivo's open feeds, anonymous polls, or suggestion boards can help everyone have a voice. It's even more beneficial for quieter team members who might not speak up in a crowded meeting.

It's a proven fact: when people know their company cares about their safety, they pay it forward by caring more about their work. In fact, [DORN Companies](#), a leader in proactive wellness and ergonomic safety, noted that engaged workers were more likely to notice and report safety issues, which led to fewer accidents and better overall safety outcomes.

Support work-life balance

A healthy workplace respects that people have lives outside of work. **You can promote balance by:**

-  Discouraging after-hours emails. Better yet, use a "send later" feature so late-night ideas don't wake someone up at 11 pm when they're asleep.
-  Creating clear boundaries around PTO (Paid Time Off). When people are off, they're really off.
-  Checking workloads regularly so burnout doesn't sneak up unnoticed.

These ideas aren't just feel-good stuff, the numbers back it up: according to a [2022 Global Wellness Institute report](#), offices that adopted comprehensive wellness programs saw 20% higher productivity and reduced absenteeism.

THE TAKEAWAY

When safety is non-negotiable, your people don't just feel protected, they feel valued. And as a result, they bring their best to work every single day. By making your people feel good physically and mentally, you've unlocked true engagement.

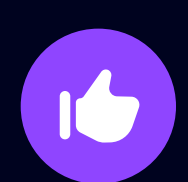


ALWAYS BE UNDERSTANDING: LISTEN FIRST, LEAD LATER

Imagine nervously approaching your supervisor for a well-deserved day off, perhaps your first request in months, only to be met with impatience, an outright rejection, and a dismissive laugh. Would you feel motivated to come back next time? Probably not.

That's why always taking the time to truly listen is one of the simplest and most powerful ways to show your team you value them.

One [Harvard Business Review article](#) (2025) reviewed 117 studies and found a direct link between genuine listening and stronger engagement. **When people feel heard:**



Engagement climbs: They're more invested in their work.



Performance improves: Understanding challenges leads to better problem-solving.



Relationships deepen: Trust grows between colleagues and leaders.

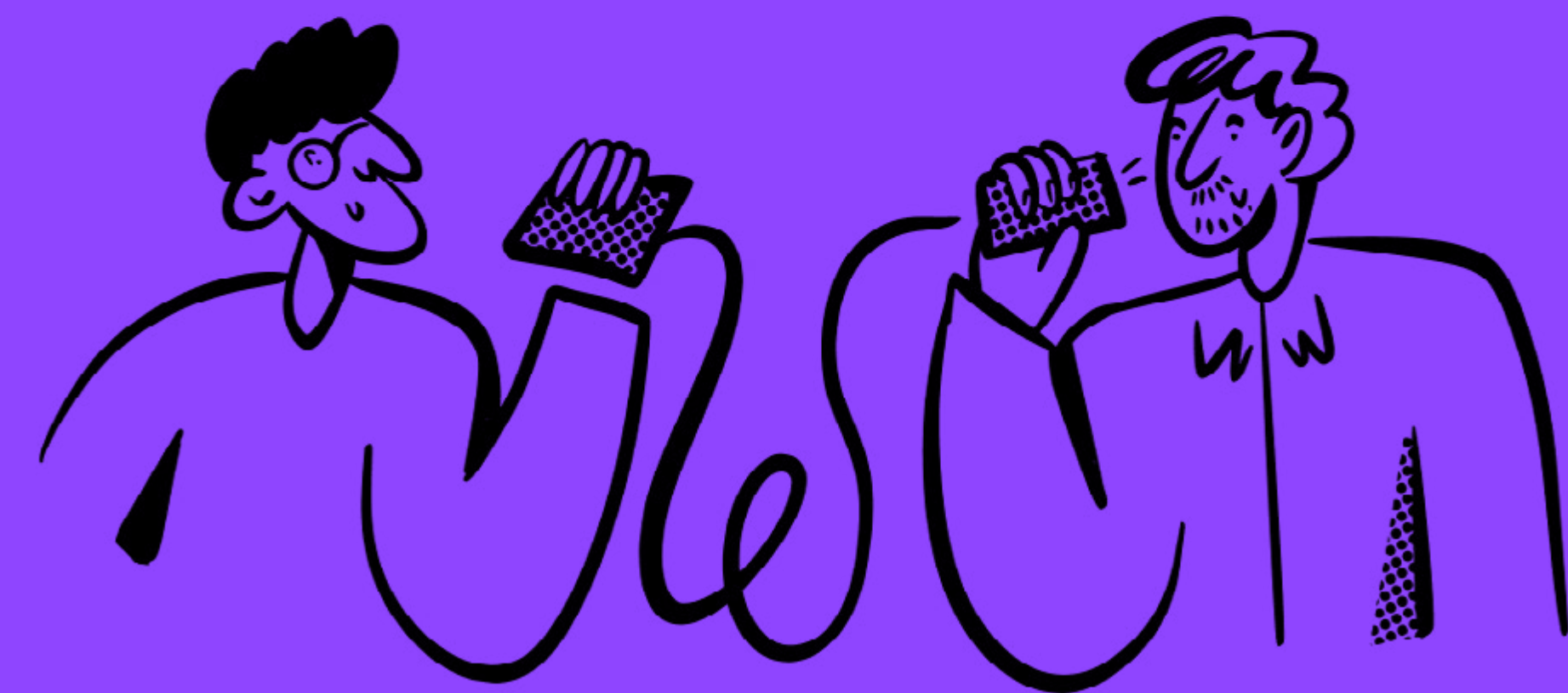


5 ways to practice understanding

- 01** • **Pause and give full attention:** Put away your phone or keyboard. Make eye contact and signal that this conversation is your priority.
- 02** • **Ask open-ended questions:** Instead of "Did you finish that report?" try "What challenges did you run into while working on the report?"
- 03** • **Reflect on what you hear:** Say things like, "So, you're saying the timeline was too tight because of X, did I get that right?" This shows you're processing their point of view.
- 04** • **Hold judgment:** Listen without jumping to conclusions or interrupting. Sometimes, people just need to be heard before they can find a solution.
- 05** • **Follow up with action:** If someone requests time off, feedback, or resources, work to accommodate them or explain the constraints. Employees trust leaders who act on what they hear.

THE TAKEAWAY

People may forget what you said, but they'll never forget how you made them feel. By pausing to listen and acting on what you hear, you demonstrate to your team that they're people you respect and care about. That understanding is the cornerstone of lasting engagement.

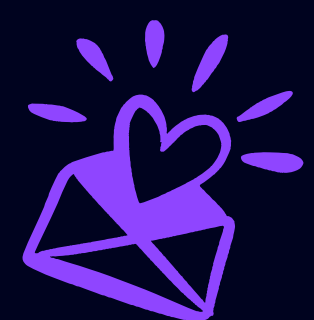


MAKE ENGAGEMENT A DAILY HABIT

Even after implementing ideas, don't stop once you see results. Turn it into a continuous process.

Notably, [McKinsey's 2024 Organizational Health research](#), after analyzing data from 1,500 companies, confirmed that companies that measure and improve employees' health (embedding it into monthly and quarterly reviews) experience an 18% increase in earnings.

You have to keep listening and adapting. Regularly survey your team and act on feedback. Celebrate progress, but then set new challenges. As the saying goes, "the purpose of the dance is the dance itself!" The goal here is to keep employees happily engaged every day.



One practical tip: use a modern employee communication platform (like Workvivo) to make this easy.

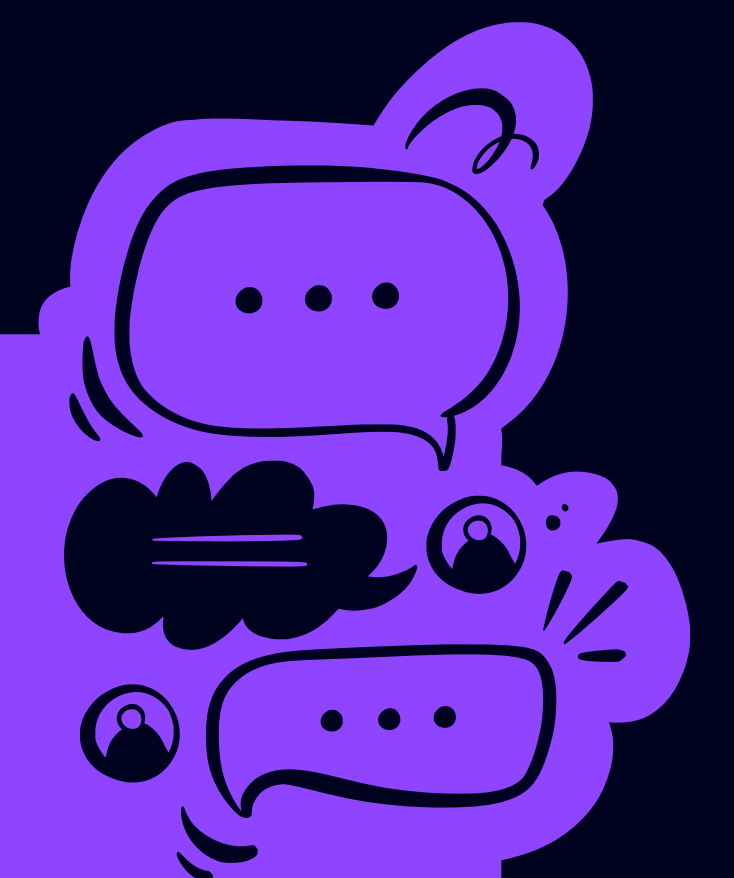
For instance, [Bus Éireann](#) (Ireland's national transport company) treated employee engagement as continuous. Today, 89% of its staff are on the Workvivo app, and 60% log in daily. Over two years, their engagement score jumped 55%.

Likewise, [Convera](#) doubled its employee engagement and productivity and saw 91% of employees active each month after embedding Workvivo in its daily workflow. Even better, they recorded a 99% adoption rate.

In the end, real engagement is never a box you tick once a year. It's an everyday habit — a living promise that your people are heard, valued, and supported to do their best work.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Make engagement a daily practice, not an annual event. Keep the conversations open, act on feedback, and build a workplace where showing up inspired is just part of the job.

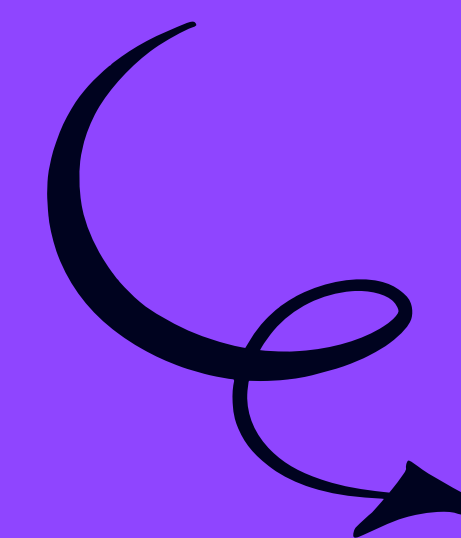


THE REAL WORK STARTS NOW

When it comes to employee engagement, one of the most powerful things you can do is show your staff that you care for them — both as individuals and as a collective. This builds trust, passion, and loyalty.

These ideas aren't one-off tricks; they're daily habits that show your commitment to your team. Yes, it takes effort. But the return is priceless: teams who show up energized, stay longer, and push your mission forward because they feel they belong.

And in a world where disengagement costs companies billions every year, that's the best investment you'll ever make.



The best time to start? Right now! *~*



About Workvivo

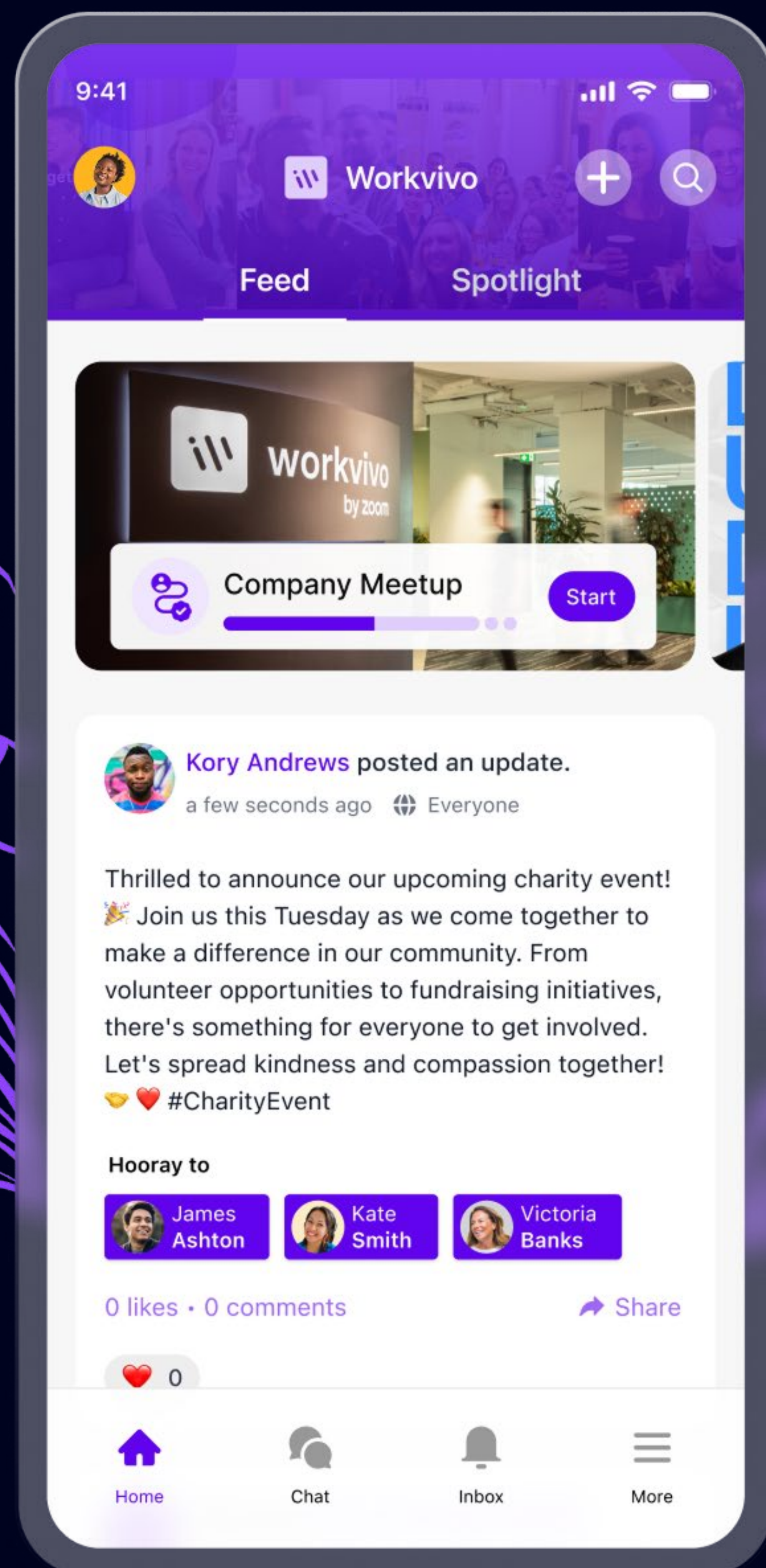
Workvivo is the communication platform employees love to use. We took the digital social experiences people are familiar with in their personal lives and brought them into the workplace.

Employees can read and post content, like, share, and comment just the same way they do outside of the working environment. But it goes deeper: they can also recognize others through shoutouts, link posts to company goals and values, create community spaces, and publish company articles and events.

The way employees interact is changing, and companies must adapt to maintain high levels of employee engagement. We founded Workvivo to connect employees in new and interesting ways. To increase engagement, to amplify culture, and to create a real sense of community.

Our mission is to elevate everyone's workplace experience by helping employees stay informed, engaged, and connected wherever they work. Book a 1:1 demo session today to learn more about our product.

[Book a demo](#)





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