

# Leadership: The Essential Ingredient to Employee Engagement

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## A Manager's Guide to Everyday Engagement *(Adapted from [Kevin Sheridan](#))*

Research supports that if a manager is disengaged, her/his workgroup is more likely to be disengaged. Although engagement is everyone's responsibility, it is important to recognize the parts of the engagement process where leaders can most directly impact employee engagement.

Kevin Sheridan created an employee engagement checklist for managers based on key driver analysis (i.e. the areas that lead to the most engagement) of millions of employee engagement survey responses. The following suggestions he made are in order of importance and have been adapted to our workplace.

- Carve out one hour each week to recognize employees who do great work or accomplish great outcomes. Try putting a reminder in your Google calendar.
- Hold a career development conversation with each of your direct reports, preferably quarterly. And ask them about the vision they have for their career, where they wanted to be in six months or a year, and offer them help to achieve that career objectives to the best of your ability.
- Routinely (weekly to monthly check-in meetings) ask each employee what things get them passionate and excited about doing their job as well as what things disengage them about the work and/or the work environment.
- Have a genuine interest in what each of your employees are interested in outside of work, their passions, hobbies, favorite ways to relax and refuel, and when possible reward them for great work with a gift related to their interests outside of work. Or better yet, ask them what they find rewarding for a job well done and motivating to continue their great work.
- Be sure you have given each employee clear documented instructions and your expectations on what outcomes they should accomplish in their job. It should be clear what great work looks like to you and how to achieve it.
- Find ways to insert more FUN into your department and workplace culture and ask your employees for their ideas.

This checklist may not cover all of the bases, so be sure you are infusing these practices with continuous listening to your employees about the drivers of engagement that are working well for them and those that can be improved.

One final note: it is a best practice when managers review this checklist every month. It's also useful to ask a trusted peer to help hold you accountable to the consistent execution of these practices and provide ideas and support when you encounter questions and/or challenges along the way.

Feel free to also contact an LTD consultant at [ee2@umn.edu](mailto:ee2@umn.edu) for any questions you may have about impacting employee engagement.

Please also check out our resources at [z.umn.edu/engagedU](http://z.umn.edu/engagedU)