

Engage: 2 of 3 Reinvent Essentials - A Manager's Leadership Framework

2. Engage

With remote work becoming the norm, Gallup found (most of the time) remote workers are better engaged.* CFOs are reviewing areas to ensure lean operations are ready for the new economy. Our reinvention framework lets you rock any review, engage performers, and show leadership.

High Performers: Your Special Focus

Engagement activities are normally broadly focused. The lack of useful detail frustrates high performers, whose higher productivity and innovation protects teams, headcounts, and careers.

Economic-Financial Safety

Staff appreciate effort to promote safety: physical (e.g. distancing), emotional (empathizing e.g. our #2 essential), but high performers will focus more on **economic** safety. They want to safeguard financial prospects and expect to be involved in detailed conversations out of respect for their contribution.

Propose Half-Finished Ideas

Refrain from planning implementation tactics too thoroughly for your area's new plans or projects. Plan enough to assure success to senior leadership, then especially engage high performers to save effort, leverage expertise, and implement effectively.

Invite

Ask for your teams' opinions. Ignore, 'That wouldn't work here,' and welcome, "If we do what's suggested, then this function may face a more difficult time. We'd probably have to adjust 'x'."

When the decision is made and it is time to implement, invite them in and say, "We're going to do 'x' (because we managers are in place to *execute* not *dispute*), but I've got real questions about how best to accomplish it. You folk know the details, system, and limitations, and I thought if we worked together, the resulting plan would be more realistic and actionable with less delays or disruptions. Can we work together on this?" This focus on detail will

be received as respectful, particularly by high performers because it honors their expertise. Detailed conversations also match the working time horizons of most jobs, so they engage.

Gallup's 5 Conversations* to Engage

Five different, increasingly detailed conversations are required. Only the first two are common:

1. **Daily connect** – "Hi. How are you doing today?"
2. **Weekly status** – "Where are we on your work?"
3. **Role relationship** – "Let's talk about you work as compared from what we should expect from anyone who would perform this role." To be successful this is a *comparison* not a *fault-finding exercise*. You must first have an objective view of the role's expected actions and behaviors. Most managers lack sufficient role knowledge and miss this engagement builder. You point out strengths and weaknesses related to the role.
4. **Coaching conversation** – "Would you like a few suggestions on adjustments to daily actions and behaviors to help you perform at a higher level?" I have never seen anyone say no to this sincere offer (which flows naturally from conversation #3). High performers, millennials expect their managers to coach them to maximize their potential and contribution. And finally:
5. **Progress update** – aka "Performance review." Always separate from conversation #4. Required to engage high performers because they perform and want feedback. Two things are vital:
 - a. **No surprise** – Nothing is every mentioned here that was not first brought up in a #4 coaching conversation to give opportunity for the individual to take corrective action.
 - b. **Future focused** – This isn't a recap of the past year's screw ups but a recount of what was accomplished and then a discussion of what behaviors to focus on to totally rock their contribution over the next year.

*<https://www.gallup.com/workplace/309521/facts-engagement-remote-workers.aspx>