



Increase **Employee Engagement** with Digital Signs

DIGITAL SIGNAGE WHITE PAPER



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Engagement Defined

The word engage means “to occupy or attract someone’s interest or attention”. It also means to involve someone in a conversation or discussion, to establish a meaningful contact or connection, and to participate or become involved in. It’s the latter meanings that are the focus in a term you’ve probably heard a lot – employee engagement. An engaged employee is one who enthusiastically involves themselves in, and takes positive actions to further the interests and reputation of, the organization they work for.

The term “engagement” in this context was coined by William Kahn, a professor at Boston University, in the 1990s. It came from his observation that people choose how much of themselves to invest in a job or company. After interviewing people, he found that workers were more emotionally engaged, and even more physically active at work, when they had three psycho-emotional needs met:

1. *Psychological Meaningfulness* – a feeling their work meant something, and made a difference in the world
2. *Psychological Safety* – a feeling they were accepted as they were, and valued and respected
3. *Availability* – a feeling of security and confidence that they had the ability, support and tools to get the job done, and done right

Employee engagement is a lot more than just happy or satisfied workers. Engaged employees go the extra mile, and work harder and more efficiently because they care – they are emotionally engaged in the organization’s wellbeing. Getting your workforce engaged should be a primary goal of any organization, regardless of its size.

The Good News

Gallup finds that higher workplace engagement leads to 37% lower absenteeism, 21% higher productivity, 41% fewer safety incidents and quality defects, and 28% less internal theft. The Aberdeen Group sees direct links between employee engagement and customer satisfaction, with 26% greater revenue and 233% higher customer loyalty – a staggering number.

As an article in Fast Company reported, there are many different ways to measure engagement, yet the findings always come out the same. There are literally dozens of other studies and articles that show engaged employees:

- stay at a job longer
- are more productive
- work longer hours
- increase profitability
- are more committed to their company
- are more innovative
- are more collaborative
- help foster a sense of harmony and community

A recent Gallup poll asked employees if they’d leave their current position for a 20% or less pay increase. While 54% of actively disengaged workers said yes, only 37% of engaged employees would. (In fact, the attrition rate for disengaged employees is 12 times higher than for highly engaged ones, according to Glint.)

Effective
Employee
Engagement

=

21% Higher
Productivity

26% Higher
Revenues

233% Higher
Customer Loyalty

37% Lower
Absenteeism

41% Fewer
Safety Incidents

28% Less
Shrinkage

Another Gallup study showed that companies with highly involved employees significantly outperform those who don't. This confirmed with hard data something many managers had long suspected – people work harder when they feel like they are part of something, and like where they work.

Other studies show that even small gains in improving communications with your workers leads to increased performance. It's a simple concept: happy, engaged employees come to work more often, stay at their jobs longer and do better work. This, in turn, leads to higher profits and a more efficient workplace.

This all makes sense – engaged employees are happier and more fulfilled, so they want to stay with their companies, work harder and longer, are more effective, and somehow transfer that sense of satisfaction to customers they deal with.

A lot of managers and HR departments understand at least some of this. Deloitte says that 85% of executives rated engagement as an important (38%) or very important (48%) priority for their companies, and 64% of executives say they are measuring employee engagement once a year (only 18% say their companies don't formally measure employee engagement at all). The Temkin Group finds that 80% of HR pros say that employee engagement is an important area of focus for their organization, and an Aon Hewitt study says people want more enablement, autonomy and sense of accomplishment.

The Bad News

Does it really matter if employees aren't particularly engaged at work? After all, they are paid to do a job, so they should just do it, right? That sort of thinking is outdated and inaccurate, yet it's still an unfortunate reality in a lot of companies.

Gallup says that less than a third of US employees are engaged at work, over half of employees are "not engaged" and 16% are "actively disengaged". A Willis Towers Watson Global Workforce Study finds that 60% of employees in all business sectors lack the elements needed to engage them. Those are not encouraging numbers.

And the employees themselves are aware of this – a Psychometrics Engagement Study says 82% of employees say it's "very important" that their organization address the issue of engagement, and 69% say engagement is a "problem" where they work.

It costs around 150% of an employee's salary to replace that employee. Fortune Magazine says that employee retention is the number one worry for employers. And, throwing money at employees doesn't really do the trick – a mere 12% of workers leave their current jobs for higher pay.

Many workers are neither satisfied or unsatisfied – they simply see their job as a job, and not much more – victims of the old way of thinking. Half of US workers are already looking for the next job opportunity, according to Manpower Group Solutions, and a Towers Watson Global Workforce Study shows that over a fourth of current employees plan to leave their employers in the next two years.

A Harvard paper shows that workers in the top 1% of productivity add around \$5000 profit a year to an organization, while toxic workers cost \$12,000 a year each. And bad apples spread their dissatisfaction to others, lowering engagement and satisfaction wherever they go.

Other studies show similar trends, though the specifics may be somewhat different. The fact is that today's workforce is diverse, and each employee has different priorities. Engagement isn't a mechanistic system – it needs to be flexible and able to reach all types of employees within an organization. Some people are analytical, others are structural, some are conceptual and still others may be more social.



Over 50%
of Employees are
Not Engaged

Millennials

Millennials are the fastest growing segment of the workforce. A study by Gallup finds that only 25% are engaged, 55% are not engaged and 16% are actively disengaged (totaling 71% or almost three-fourths) – so slightly worse than employees overall. In fact, Millennials are the least engaged segment of the workforce. And this is bad news because Millennials seem to have no problem simply changing jobs.

That same Gallup study says that 60% of working Millennials are currently “open” to a new job opportunity. This is partly because they’ve been with the company less time, so have less invested. They are also younger and less likely to have responsibilities that might keep them working for an organization. Jobvite says that 42% of Millennials expect to change jobs at least every 1-3 years. Gallup says that Millennial turnover alone costs the US economy over \$30 billion annually.

On the other hand, Millennials who are engaged say that they are 64% less likely to switch jobs, even if the job market improves in the next 12 months. So, if Millennials are not engaged, they are more likely to leave a job than workers from other generations, and if they are engaged, they are less likely to leave. Since Millennials will make up 75% of the workforce by 2025, it is crucial to understand this and work toward effective engagement strategies for this group.

It truly is about much more than just the money for this generation. Many say they’d prefer to work at a lower paying job that they love, than a higher paying one they don’t. Perhaps the best thing you can do is get some of your Millennials on board with your digital signage strategy – advising, creating content, developing campaigns, and thinking about all the types of messages and information that they would find engaging. And if they’re engaged, they’re happy. If they’re happy, they work harder and longer, are more productive and innovative, and less likely to seek employment elsewhere.

We can see that, even though they are the most racially and culturally diverse generation ever, Millennials want to feel part of a larger community – part of something worthwhile. When choosing a place to work, 78% say that “workplace quality” is important. By that, they mean things above and beyond the money.

Using Digital Signs for Engagement

It really comes down to communication – companies that communicate more effectively with their employees have much higher numbers for engagement. And the perfect tool for delivering engaging communications is your digital signage. It’s faster than email, it reaches everyone, it presents information in a visually appealing way, and yet it’s also non-intrusive – people can look or not look, as they wish. The trick is to make them want to look. You do that by leveraging your digital signage to the fullest.

You can choose exactly where your displays go, and decide which messages go to which screens. It’s visual, it’s memorable, it’s varied and it’s as comprehensive as you want it to be. Simply talk to your employees to find out what would make their work more fulfilling. You can then use your digital signage in various ways to engage them:

- Manage employee expectations by showing your mission and policies
- Increase morale with employee recognition and support
- Encourage collaboration through visual space management
- Personalize your messages so people feel special and important
- Engage employees in multiple locations to build community
- Engage various age groups with different messaging techniques
- Use metrics with real-time data to improve productivity
- Include screens in integrated and long-tail communications campaigns
- Get immediate feedback from your audience with calls to action
- Use gamification to keep people interested over the long run

The fact is that there is no single communication tool that has the reach, flexibility and power of digital signage. No matter who you have working for you, you can reach them quickly and effectively with well-designed digital signage content.

Engaging Content

In addition to your usual content, incorporate messages that make your employees feel like they know what's going on in the company, and that they are a valuable part of the organization.

Having company events and team-building activities are tried and true ways of building a sense of community, and your digital signs can certainly help get the word out about them. But there's a lot more your system can do:

Represent your brand

- Simple messages about what your company believes and finds important reminds employees on a daily basis and helps keep them mentally on track with your organization. Not Big Brother-type dictates, but reminders of what you do, how people benefit from your company's products and services, testimonials from satisfied clients – things like that.
- In earlier times, this sort of thing might have been considered the exclusive domain of management, but today's workers (especially Millennials) need to feel like they are doing something worthwhile and want to see the bigger picture and their place in it.

Celebrate achievement

- When goals are met or exceeded, when milestones occur, or when employees and teams get official recognition from your industry, why not let everyone know about it?
- Create an employee of the month program, which generates excitement and a healthy sense of competitiveness. When a department makes important progress on something, share that information. If someone wins an award, share it. Showing company metrics also helps keep your workers "in the know".

Revitalize the atmosphere

- Add fun to your digital signage playlists. Post trivia questions, funny quotes and memes, beautiful pictures your employees have taken – anything to add a sense of playfulness. Holding contests and giveaways will certainly engage employees, as well as giving you an immediate way to measure how effective your communications are. You might encourage your employees to contribute messages as well.
- Celebrating birthdays and anniversaries makes people feel included and makes the workplace feel more familiar and welcoming than just the place where they do their jobs. Your employees are more than just resources – they're people and will appreciate a company that remembers that

Boomers – Born 1946-1965

Boomers want to express themselves and are very focused on work. They are all about knowing what's happening and why.



- . You can speed up playlists and add more items
- . Add in video and animations
- . Post messages with your mission statement
- . Recognize teams for hitting targets – make sure to include everyone who contributed
- . Productivity and safety stats let them know that management is paying attention to how they are doing
- . Health tips and benefits announcements are likely to appeal to this generation
- . Community announcements, blood drives, fundraisers and family days are sure to get noticed by this generation, especially anything that lets them combine work with family and friends

Generation X – Born 1966-1985

Xers want the big picture, but they also want specifics and transparency. They're comfortable getting their info in many different formats.



- . Use multi-window layouts and ticker feeds
- . Give them company strategies and tactics, as well as the reasoning behind them
- . Post quarterly performance and financial info
- . Show best practices and policies, and keep them updated on any changes
- . Invite their participation by letting your Xers submit messages
- . Include ROI triggers to get their feedback
- . Use storytelling techniques for a series of messages or campaigns
- . Balance your work bulletins with lifestyle messages
- . Display webpages on your displays
- . Consider adding interactive screens

Report current events

- Something as simple as including news, weather and traffic will be a value-add for your employees. If you can save someone getting stuck in terrible traffic, or get home before a severe thunderstorm, you have done them a favor and they will appreciate you for it.
- This is doubly true for incorporating an emergency alert system with your digital signage. Your people will know what to do if something goes wrong, and that you have thought about their well-being and safety in advance.
- You can even display things like building energy usage, which would be important in an organization where people feel environmental concerns are important.

Reinforce with repetition

- One of the great things about digital signage is that you can repeat your messages throughout the day and in multiple locations. Changing the layout and wording from time to time will keep it seeming fresh, while your core message continues to be communicated.
- Think about using long-tail campaigns along with your one-off messages. A series of connected messages that tell a story or build on a theme will have people paying attention and talking about what comes next. You can actually create “viral” messages right there in your own company – if people are talking about it, and directing others to see it, then you know it’s working.
- And, of course adding video, interactivity and gamification will further entice your viewers, as will attractive design.

Recognition and Rewards

According to data from the National Business Research Institute, 69% of disengaged workers do not feel appreciated by management. And 49% of employees said they’d immediately leave their current job for a company that clearly recognized employee efforts and contributions. Clearly recognition is important to people.

Recognition makes employees feel more engaged, and your digital signs can help you with this without causing an undue burden upon managers and HR. Display leaderboards and shout outs for landing a big contract, or for going above and beyond the call of duty. Mark work anniversaries, and spotlight employees so everyone gets to know one another. When there’s a new hire, make them feel part of the team with welcome messages. Anything you can do to motivate and recognize your teams will result in higher morale and bottom-line results.

Use your screens to recognize top performers, or someone who just landed a big client, or leveraged a small order into a larger one. Show progress towards goals, like sales quotas, using real-time performance KPIs, displayed as easy-to-read visualizations. This also shows a level of transparency that modern workers find motivating and expect from the companies they devote their time to. For teams that aren’t performing so well, this data can allow you to refocus objectives quickly, getting the best out of all your teams.

Millennials – Born 1986-2005

Millennials are not only comfortable with digital communication – they expect it. They are unhappy with push messaging and like info to be interactive.



- . Show more messages, more frequently, in multi-screen layouts - you can’t overload Millennials
- . Keep your playlist peppy with lots of animations and videos
- . Extend your digital signage to include smartphones, tablets and other mobile devices
- . Bring in social media, YouTube videos and other popular online infotainment feeds they’re already using
- . Display birthdays, shout outs, and other micro recognition
- . Show short videos or messages for training purposes
- . Include touchscreens – this generation expects interactivity
- . Foster competition and engagement with contests - be sure to reward both teams and individuals
- . Add in gamification elements to foster community, participation and interest
- . Funny memes and irreverent humor go a long way with Millennials - think “viral” messaging

Make sure your recognition efforts are:

- **Visible** – Everyone needs to see that an individual or team has been singled out for their efforts.
- **Frequent** – There should be a culture of recognition in your organization so that the praise doesn't seem out of place, fostering jealousy.
- **Fair** – Everyone has to have a chance to get recognized. Just singling out the sales team for meeting targets kind of leaves people in accounting out of the loop. Get everyone engaged by giving everyone a chance.
- **Specific** – The praise should be about something specific, the more specific the better. Telling people “nice work, keep it up” gives them nothing to focus on. Even something like “great energy this week” at least tells them something.
- **Sincere** – If it seems false, or rote, then your recognition will actually feel more insulting than if you'd said nothing at all. Making things specific helps make them seem authentic.

Just as the last two items go together, visibility and frequency also go together. This is where your digital signs come in. Your employees are used to looking at them for anything from the date and time to announcements, performance metrics, deadline reminders – even what's on the menu at the café. Putting some recognition messages into your playlists guarantees the largest possible audience for them, and they can be scheduled to appear as frequently as you like.

Recognition may be enough, but perhaps some sort of reward is also in order (especially in organizations that use gamification techniques). Many people think of rewards in terms of money. But as studies have shown, recognition is more important than money and throwing cash at something someone has worked hard on can have the counter effect of cheapening the praise.

However, some companies are having success with spot bonuses and microbonuses. These are given immediately, on the spot, the moment the recognition is given. These can come from management but can also be awarded by peers. You could have a pool of small prizes or gift cards that people can dole out at will if they feel someone deserves recognition. Just make sure there's a simple system in place to get that recognition up on your screens as well.

Then there's simply the modern, adult version of that old school-age favorite – gold stars. Individuals or teams can accumulate points, which can be cashed in for tangible things – like shirts or hats or coffee mugs, or something digital like unique avatars to use on their computers or one-of-a-kind desktop wallpapers.

But rewards can be experiential as well. Some companies have an office mascot that selected individuals get the privilege of having at their desk for a day or a week in recognition of their efforts. A team does exceptionally well? Give them free lunch for a week, or morning donuts, or gourmet coffee. Got several candidates who did well one week? Bring in a food truck for them on the company – this rewards them while also fostering teambuilding.

Everyone appreciates more time, so consider giving people a longer lunch as a reward, or scale it up to extra PTO days, or let them come in late for a week. Or you can offer them free professional training and certification, so they can improve in their jobs, which benefits themselves and the company at the same time.

Being specific can apply to more than the recognition given, but also to the reward. Find out what your people like doing outside of work. If Jenny really loves reading, then a bookstore gift card is perfect for her. If Joseph loves cooking, how about some kitchen equipment or gourmet cooking lessons? If you have a lot of family-oriented people in a department, think about something they can share with their loved ones as well, like tickets to a water slide park or the zoo.

If the rewards feel worthwhile and special, people will appreciate it more. Use your digital signs to showcase the possibilities – high-quality photographs of potential rewards can be quite an enticement. Even if the reward is something intangible, like extra vacation days, a picture (like a person relaxing on a white sand beach) can really get them interested.

You can even have testimonials from people showing how they used and enjoyed their rewards. These can go up on your social media, which in turn can be shown on your screens. Before you know it, you'll have an incredibly positive, productive workplace, where everyone feels valued.

35% of employees don't think their employers care about them as a team member or person

Engagement plummets to 2% among teams with managers who ignore their employees, compared **61%** for teams led by managers who focus on strengths

91% of workers say they feel motivated to do their best when they have leadership support

Employees who believe their managers can name their strengths are **71% more likely** to feel engaged and energized

75% of employees receiving at least monthly recognition (even if informal) are satisfied with their job

27% of workers strongly agree that the feedback they currently receive helps them do their work better

67% of employees are happier and more productive when managers focus on the positive aspects of their performance

Employees who report feeling valued by their employer are **60% more likely** motivated to do their very best for their employer

68% of employees who receive accurate and consistent feedback feel fulfilled in their jobs

26% of Millennials say recognition motivates them to do their best at work

When asked which recognition initiative has the biggest impact on employee engagement, HR pros cited: performance awards (**33%**) and anniversary awards (**20%**)

33% of employees would rather be recognized in a company-wide email from an executive than receive a bonus of \$500

12 Important Facts About Employee Recognition

Work-Life Balance

People today do not want work to be the center of their lives. This is especially true for Generation Xers and Millennials. Employees who get burnt out will often try their luck someplace else. Make sure they know about events and activities that interest them apart from their jobs.

If your organization has a gym, advertise it on your displays, and maybe offer promotional specials from a local sports retailer. The same goes for on-site daycare and similar perks. Or make it more personal – sponsor baby showers, lunchtime food trucks, or holiday parties, and promote these using your digital signs.

Finding out what people like to do outside of work can also foster a sense of togetherness. If it turns out that 30 percent of your team enjoys cooking or food festivals, you could display recipes, advertise local foodie events, promote an internal cooking contest, etc.

You might even encourage people to get away sometimes – remind them of PTO policies and options and get them to take some needed “me” time away from work.

Community & Culture

Many Millennials feel social issues are as important to life as work, so let them know about opportunities to help out in the community, or initiatives and charities the company is involved in. It's been said that the current increase in corporate philanthropy is a direct result of the influence of Millennials. 63% of them say they want their employer to contribute to important causes (compared to around 50% for Boomers and Xers). Many Millennials spend time and money on causes – 81% have donated money, goods or services in the short time they have been working and earning.

If your organization participates in blood drives, community events or philanthropy be sure to advertise that on your screens. If one of your core values is sustainability, build that into your digital signage content with reminders about recycling, energy-saving tips and carbon offset programs. It's also a great idea to let employees submit community event notices and information about their favorite charities. Inclusivity is the key – making sure you let employees know what you believe in, but also that you care about what they believe in.

Employees might not know much about one another, which creates distance and can lead to distrust. Digital signage can be used to share information about other cultures in a transnational or global company – things like holidays or fun facts about where people are from are perfect for sharing. If your company has a branch in, say, Quebec, display French words with pronunciation and fun facts about the province your company is located in.

You can also integrate into the local community by offering special discounts at local cinemas, cafés, bookstores and restaurants on your digital signs. Or you might have special vacation deals with a local travel agent, which you can show on your screens.

The best thing is to find out where your employees' interests lie, and then come up with a way to integrate what they like to do with your workplace. If Mary and her friends already love going to the movies, and your company offers a special price for the local film festival because she works for you, that gets seen as a big bonus in her eyes.

Feedback & Presentations

Your digital signage doesn't have to be just one way. You also want your employees to interact with the information they see. One simple way to encourage that is to supply short URLs or QR codes in messages, so people can get more detailed information on the topic. And today's workers appreciate transparency, so the more information you can share about what's going on, the more included they'll feel. That's another way to keep them engaged.

You can also use your digital signs to encourage employee feedback. Simply reminding people of the process for submitting comments can go a long way to getting real data from your staff. Or you can take it a step further, with interactive kiosks or QR codes that lead to an online survey or questionnaire.

Office rumors can sometimes be a problem. But you can quash them quickly by supplying accurate information on your displays. You can even use your screens to point people to an online discussion group or Q&A session.

Video captures attention much more than text, so consider showing clips from town hall meetings or annual report presentations, or even live streaming one from time to time. You can also let your employees make their own videos to share what they're working on with the rest of the organization. A person talking on screen is always more engaging than an email full of text.

Onboarding

Start engaging people on their very first day by making them feel welcome and helping them get oriented to their new work environment. A welcome message in the playlist, including their name, picture and notable accomplishments lets everyone know who they are and encourages company veterans to reach out and say hello. You might also have spotlights of current employees, so people feel they know their coworkers and feel more connected.

You should also include a few messages that highlight the mission and values of your company, your products and services, current goals and strategic objectives, and reinforce your organizational culture. Just having this sort of thing out there is not only good for newcomers, but helps remind current staff that they are part of something larger than just their department. This gets people engaged.

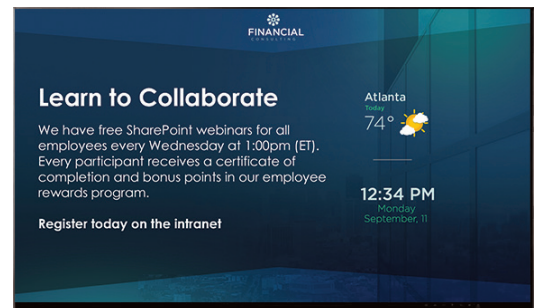
Professional Development

Training is important to employees and employers alike. Use your digital signs to advertise training and certification opportunities, online training or professional development, plus tools and resources that are available. New hires will get excited at the possibilities, while long-time workers might get inspired to try something new and get revitalized. And because good communications always have a call to action, show messages that remind people who to contact if they have any issues or questions.

Interactive digital signage can allow employees to go through a large amount of information at their own pace, as well as increasing your digital signage real estate. Self-service kiosks can even have preloaded training modules available to do on the spot.

Be creative – display quizzes with questions that only people with a certain level of training might know the answers to, then point them to where they can go to get that knowledge. You can also push them to engage with webpages and online training programs by using QR codes, so they can download the information right there on their mobile device.

Find out what your employees are interested in, or might be interested in, and then offer opportunities using your digital signage. By informing them of options, and giving them some flexibility and autonomy, you can let people discover the interest and level that is right for them.



Events

If you aren't promoting events on your digital signs, start now. You'll get far more message saturation with your screens than with emails (that are most likely either never read, or looked at once and then forgotten), and more exposure leads to more participation.

And seriously think about your designs for these promotional messages. Make sure they stand out and are different from your purely informational messages. Choose brighter backgrounds, or different layouts from your usual corporate communications to draw viewers in. People that do things together feel more connected, like they are part of a community, which helps them feel engaged.

And you don't have to limit your events to big doings. People will appreciate seeing simple meeting calendars, so they know where and when they need to be somewhere. Include upcoming events in the community to show your organization cares about more than just what goes on inside its walls.

Augmented HR

There is almost no medium- or large-scale issue that cannot be efficiently addressed using digital signage. You can reach more people than with any other communication medium and can respond to issues instantly.

Check in with your Human Resources department – how are things going? Are they getting lots of questions about basic policies or programs? If so, your digital signage can take some of the burden off them.

If there are many instances of the same issue – questions, suggestions, complaint, etc. – post messages on your displays addressing these concerns. Often an employee feels like they are the only ones with an issue – but when they see the solution on all the screens, they know that they aren't, and that management is paying attention and taking steps to help.

This is especially true in organizations that have multiple locations. And if your company has overseas facilities, you'll probably have things come up that are unique to that facility. HR can post answers and advice specific to that location, its laws, culture and language on localized playlists, no matter where their department is located. Localizing your communications will again show that management is taking a specific and focused interest in those employees.

Increase employee satisfaction and motivation, get more people to come to your events, save money and waste, and make sure that everyone is playing from the same rulebook. That's the power of good digital signage.

Conclusion

Regardless of who you have working for you, everyone wants to feel valued and like their job has a greater impact than just earning them a paycheck. You can attack the issue of employee engagement from multiple angles by using your digital signage system to its fullest.

Millennials are especially receptive to the sort of communication afforded by digital signage, and soon they will be the vast majority of people working for you. There has never been a time when digital signage is so important and also so effective. This is the employee engagement tool of the future, and it's here now.

Want to learn more? Contact us at salesteam@visix.com.



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