

Support for Managers

What is Engagement?

There are many definitions of engagement; this one is both simple and effective:

‘Engagement is an employee’s willingness and ability to contribute to company success, i.e.:

- To ‘go the extra mile’
- To put discretionary effort into their work
- To contribute more of their energy, creativity, and passion on the job

Source: Erikson

What are the key components of engagement?

Engagement has three key elements:

- **Rational: The ‘thinking’ part**
 - How well employees understand their roles and responsibilities.
- **Emotional: The ‘feeling’ part**
 - How much passion and energy they bring to their work.
- **Motivational: The ‘acting’ part**
 - How well they perform in their roles.

Source: Towers Perrin

Why is engagement important?

Engagement is a priority for organisations as:

- The difference between ‘capable but not fully committed’, and a high-performing workforce.
- Significantly impacting performance and financial results
- Directly impacting advocacy, i.e., how people feel about the organisation.
- Directly impacting retention.
- Impacting customer and client experience

Key drivers of engagement

In surveys relating to drivers of engagement, the following drivers are common:

1. Visible, empowering leadership; with a strong strategic organisational narrative, e.g. where it’s come from and where it’s going
2. Engaging managers who:
 - a. Focus on their people and give them scope to act.
 - b. Treat their people as individuals.
 - c. Coach and stretch their people.
3. Employees have a voice throughout the organisation, to reinforce and challenge views
4. Employees are seen as central to ‘the solution’.
5. Organisational integrity – the values on the wall are present in day-to-day behaviours - there is no ‘say-do’ gap

Source: McCleod Review / Employee Engagement Task Force 2008 – 2012



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How do managers impact engagement?

Managers are consistently identified as being pivotal in shaping employees' mindset, perceptions, and behaviours, for example:

'The top factor (85%) contributing to increased employee engagement is their line manager or supervisor'

Source: IABC Research Foundation/Buck Consultants

'Mediocre managers actively damage employee engagement by:

- Not taking responsibility for mistakes
- Passing on stress/feelings of overwhelm
- Commanding rather than consulting staff'

Source: Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD)

'When it comes to actions that can support both enablement and energy, few things have as much immediate impact as an effective relationship with one's direct manager.

It's the local interactions, person to person, day after day, that ultimately influence how employees feel about stress, their workload, their growth opportunities and their likelihood of remaining with the organization'

Source: Towers Watson

What is coaching?

As a practical activity, coaching is a style of conversation, or conversations, that one person has with another. The person who is coach wants to create a conversation that will benefit the other person, e.g. their learning, action and results. Coaching conversations can happen in different environments and over different timeframes. For example, you might coach someone during a quick chat at the coffee machine or in a more formal meeting where you need to discuss something at length.

Whether an exchange is a coaching conversation (or not) is more about the style of the conversation than its location, length, or content. A coaching conversation might last two minutes or two hours since, ultimately, coaching is defined by its impact. Consider this example: I might lecture someone for an hour on what I think they should do in a situation, and they may rightfully choose to ignore me. Or I may ask a simple yet challenging question, such as 'What do you think's really holding you back here?' This may make them realise something that previously lay hidden. The second example has more of a coaching effect because it causes the person to think and, therefore, come to their own conclusion.

The following questions can help you spot if a conversation might be called coaching:

- Is the focus of the conversation mostly on the individual being coached?
- Is the intention of the coach positive towards the person being coached?
- Is the coach using skills of listening, questioning and reflection?
- Will the person reflect on the conversation afterwards, and benefit from that reflection?
- Did the conversation benefit the thinking, learning or actions of someone in some way?

Source: Brilliant Coaching, by Julie Starr, Pearson Education



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How do managers who coach affect engagement?

The table below illustrates links between coaching and engagement.

Ref.	Coaching behaviour/ principle	Link to Engagement
1.	Active listening, seeking first to understand	Helps people feel valued, promotes openness and trust
2.	Active enquiry, e.g., use of open questions, facilitating the thoughts of another, e.g., what needs to happen?	Challenges people to think and express themselves more clearly and communicates that they & their thinking process are valuable.
3.	Encouraging someone to think and act for themselves, e.g., what can you do?	Encourages responsibility, ownership, and empowerment. Increases learning and development. Encourages resourcefulness and resilience.
4.	Offering challenge, observations, and constructive feedback	Challenges the individual, promotes a high-performance culture, develops talent
5.	To operate from a principle that other people can do more, be more	Communicates value of the people who work for them. Creates a filter for 'possibility'. Increases challenge on the individual. Creates 'adult-adult' relationships with subordinates.
6.	An increased focus on the need to develop others around them, e.g., create the context in which others are successful.	Communicates the value of people in a tangible way. Challenges others to learn, develop and perform. Increases an individual's awareness of their own potential in a practical, tangible way.
7.	Operating from a paradigm of interdependency, e.g., creating results through others.	Challenges the individual to do more, be more (and so increases enjoyment) Lessens the pressure/workload on the manager. Strengthens communities, e.g., teams, e.g. as managers focus on the capacity of the whole team as a practical extension of themselves.

Take action

The following are ways in which you might increase your contribution in this area:

1. Productive Reflection:

- What is our managers' and leaders' typical interpersonal skills level, e.g. ability to build openness and trust, ask great questions, and develop others?
- How would better conversational skills enable our managers and leaders to improve communication and performance more broadly?
- What difference would coaching principles and behaviours make to the culture of our workplace?

2. Identify Opportunity

- What is the number 1 priority for change in the organisation?
- How do better conversational/leadership & people skills link to that?
- What are the benefits available of giving our managers the skills to coach effectively?

3. Get Started

- Who already understands this need, e.g. who needs to be involved in initial discussions?
- Who are the likely sponsors/stakeholders of any development activity?
- What might stop change from being successful? e.g. identify risks, road-blocks and potential barriers to progress



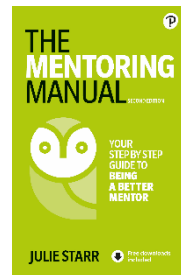
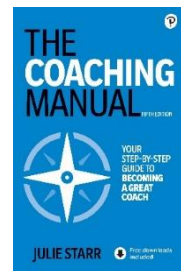
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About Starr Coaching

Starr Coaching provides innovative coaching and mentoring solutions to some of the best-known organisations in the world. Our strength lies in our ability to make simple, powerful shifts in how managers and leaders think and act. From tech to Finance, from luxury retail to manufacturing, we prove that when you shift to a positive mindset, everything changes.

About Julie Starr

Our founder, Julie Starr, has influenced thousands of practitioners with her books and coaching principles. Translated around the world, and recommended reading on many coaching programmes Julie's bestselling book *The Coaching Manual* is trusted globally as the definitive guide to coaching. Includes clear principles, tips, and free supporting downloads. Her other books, *The Mentoring Manual* and *Brilliant Coaching* build coaching ability through simple principles and practical approaches.



Find out more

www.starrcoaching.co.uk and www.LearnStarr.com.

Get in touch

To see how we can help transform behaviours in your workplace, why not get in touch? info@starrcoach.co.uk or learn@learnstarr.com

