| Maximizing Employee Engagement  Participant Guide  Images depicting employees fully engaged in their tasks |
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**Front Matter**

United States

Office of Personnel Management

Executive Services

Senior Executive Service & Performance Management

1900 E Street, NW

Washington, DC 20415

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# Participant Information

Welcome to the Maximizing Employee Engagement course! This is a companion to the 60-minute Maximizing Employee Engagement web-based training (WBT) course, which is accessible on OPM’s HR University (<http://hru.gov>) and OPM’s Training and Development Wiki (<http://www.opm.gov/wiki/training/index.aspx>). This instructor-led course is intended to supplement the information provided in the WBT by using activities and discussions to reinforce learning. If you have not already, we recommend that you take the 60-minute WBT course.

In this Participant Guide you will find the course guidelines and content, copies of the PowerPoint slides with room on each page for notes, and copies of all activities and job aids, to include an action plan table for you to use in support of your engagement efforts.

## Ground Rules

During this course everyone is asked to:

* Participate
* Be on time
* Stay on task
* Share responsibility for training
* Listen when others talk
* Respect the opinions and attitudes of others
* Turn off cell phones and mobile devices
* Use flip chart Parking Lot items

Importantly, this is a safe place to share your ideas and thoughts.

Give constructive feedback, suggestions, and other responses to other participants during the activities and discussions.

However, try to keep your comments, questions, and discussion on track with the lesson topic; avoid digressions and tangents.

## Your Participant Guide

Your Participant Guide is organized into three sections:

* Section 1: Course Content includes the PowerPoint slides with space for notes and all course activity materials
* Section 2: Job Aids includes all of the job aids used in the course
* Section 3: Supplemental Reading and References

## Course Agenda

The sequence of lessons, topics within each lesson and the estimated instructional time (reported in minutes) for the course is as follows:

| **Lesson and Topic Titles** | **Estimated Time (minutes)** |
| --- | --- |
| **Introduction** | **20** |
| **Factors that Influence Engagement** | **60** |
| Overview of Engagement | 20 |
| You and Your Employees’ Engagement | 40 |
| **Matching Motivators to Individuals** | **75** |
| Job Characteristics | 45 |
| Leadership Styles | 30 |
| **Barriers to Engagement** | **65** |
| Interpersonal Barriers | 45 |
| Organizational Barriers | 20 |
| **Develop an Action Plan** | **30** |
| **Conclusion** | **5** |
| **Total** | **255 (or 4.5 hours)** |

Breaks will be scheduled throughout the course.

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| Section 1: Course Content |
| --- |

# Introduction

This is the Lesson: Introduction slide which is the first lesson of this course.  The other lessons of the course are listed on the slide.  They are listed in sequential order and include: Factors that Influence Engagement, Matching Motivators to Individuals, Barriers to Engagement, Develop an Action Plan and Conclusion.


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This is the Icebreaker slide.  It asks you to complete this sentence “The best thing about working with this agency is”.  You must complete this statement using the first letter of your name.


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This is the Course Approach slide.  We will “Discuss engagement, barriers and solutions” and “Identify some techniques to improve engagement”.  To do this, we will “Work mostly in small groups”, “Identify what works or what doesn’t” and “Put yourselves in others’ shoes”.  We will also Develop an Action Plan.  For this plan, you will identify three employee engagement challenges, as well as the actions, target level, resources needed, and communication plan to address those challenges  Finally, you should highlight and make notes as you proceed through the course.


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This is the Course Objectives slide listing the four course objectives: Recognize factors that influence employee engagement, Understand the importance of matching motivators to individuals, Recognize potential barriers to engagement, and Identify actions you can take to develop and sustain a culture of engagement.


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# Factors that Influence Engagement

This is the Lesson: Factors that Influence Engagement slide which is the second lesson of this course. Beneath the lesson title are the two objectives of this this lesson: “Identify job-related factors that influence levels of engagement for different individuals” and “Recognize your roles as Federal leaders in fostering employee engagement”.  All other lessons listed on the slide are grayed.  These include: Introduction, Matching Motivators to Individuals, Barriers to Engagement, Develop an Action Plan, and Conclusion.


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## Overview of Engagement

This is the first topic title slide of this lesson: Overview of Engagement.


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This is the Activity # 1 slide: Characteristics of an Engaged Employee.


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This is the Engaged Workplace – Characteristic Examples slide.  It describes engaged employees as “Passionate”, “Energetic” and “Dedicated to job”.  Some conditions that are conducive to engagement include: “Effective leadership”, “Work that provides meaning” and “Opportunities to learn and grow on the job”.  There is a graphic at the bottom of the slide which consists of four chevron arrows pointing to the right.  The first arrow is labeled “Organizational Conditions”.  The second is labeled “Feelings of Engagement”.  The third is labeled “Engagement Behaviors”. The fourth is labeled “Optimum Organizational Performance”.


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This is the Activity #2 slide: Myths about Employee Engagement.


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This is the Myths about Engagement slide.  It lists five statements about engagement.  For each statement questions about it are posed for discussion. These statements and associated questions include:  Compensation is the biggest driver of engagement – What are some other drivers?  Drivers of engagement are the same across agencies – Why would people think that?  Drivers of engagement are the same as drivers of agency results – Why or why not?  The best agency leaders are great at inspiring employees – It this true at your agency?  Employee engagement is HR’s responsibility – What is HR’s role? Who else has a role in improving engagement?


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## You and Your Employees’ Engagement

This is the second topic title slide of this lesson: You and Your Employees’ Engagement.


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This is the Activity #3 slide: Factors that Influence Your Engagement.


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### Activity: Factors that Influence Your Engagement

Reflect on a time when you felt engaged and/or disengaged at work. What kinds of factors in your work environment promoted or hindered your engagement?

| **Factors that Influence Your Engagement** | **Did it promote or hinder your engagement?** |
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This is the Activity #4 slide: Challenges that Influence Your Employees’ Engagement.


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### Activity: Challenges that Influence Your Employees’ Engagement

Think back to before you became a supervisor. What challenges did you have with your manager or supervisor that affected your engagement?

Today, as a supervisor, what are some of the specific challenges to engagement you have seen among your employees? Write these responses in the first column below.

Discuss your responses to these questions within your small group and designate a group member to be the reporter. As a class, we will help each other identify possible solutions to overcome each challenge.

| **Challenges that Influence Your Employees’ Engagement** | **Possible Solutions to the Challenges** |
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This is the Challenges, Solutions and Tactics slide.  Four challenges are listed.  Each has a solution identified to address the challenge.  For some of the solutions, one or more tactics are listed.  The challenges, solutions, and tactics include:
The challenge is “Lack of Communication”. A potential solution is “More interpersonal interactions”.  Possible tactics include: “Schedule face-to-face meetings” , “Create opportunities for getting to know each other better” and “Share information”.
The challenge is “Need for Career Growth”. A potential solution is “Look for opportunities for career growth”.  Possible tactics include: “Provide mentoring or job shadowing opportunities” and “Volunteer them for a task force or special project”
The challenge is “Lack of Recognition or Improper Recognition”. A potential solution is “Recognize and reward good performance”.  A possible tactic is “Do so in a timely, consistent, appropriate, and fair manner”.
The challenge is “Lack of Guidance”. A potential solution is “Clarify expectations for work environment”.


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This is the Engagement Responsibilities slide.  It lists those responsibilities for engagement associated with employees, supervisors and managers, and executives.  These responsibilities include: Employees should take steps to improve their own engagement.  They should understand their own values and interests to ensure they are aligned with agency mission  They should also ask for assistance in obtaining growth opportunities. Supervisors and managers should use the performance review cycle to: show alignment between job and agency mission/goals, build effective relationships and have an open dialogue. Executives should establish a culture of engagement by setting up and using two-way communication mechanisms.  They should be transparent and share what is going on with the organization.


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# Matching Motivators to Individuals

This is the Lesson: Matching Motivators to Individuals slide which is the third lesson of this course. Beneath the lesson title are the two objectives to be addressed: “Recognize job design as a motivator of engagement and understand how to use it to increase engagement” and “Understand how your leadership style can affect employee engagement”.  All other lessons listed on the slide are grayed and include: Introduction, Factors that Influence Engagement, Barriers to Engagement, Develop an Action Plan, and Conclusion.


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## Job Characteristics

This is the first topic title slide of this lesson: Job Characteristics.


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This is the Motivators slide.  It lists a table of job characteristics and their descriptions and asks the question “Would any of these job characteristics motivate your individual employees?”.  The job characteristics and their descriptions include:
Skill Variety - Perform a variety of tasks that require a wide range of knowledge, skills, and abilities.
Task Identity - Complete a single piece of work (rather than bits and pieces) from beginning to end.
Task Significance - Have a significant positive impact on others, either within the organization or the public in general.
Autonomy - Have the freedom to make decisions regarding how they accomplish their work. 
Feedback - Receive information about their job performance and the effectiveness of their efforts, either directly from the work itself or from others.


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This is the Scenario Discussion slide.  Two scenarios are presented.  Lucy is a very analytical person. She seems to enjoy work where she can clearly see how the pieces fit together. She has often said she doesn’t like projects where she doesn’t see clearly the connection between what she does and the rest of the work. Instead, she likes projects where she has been able to see the results of her work.  Max is a top-performing employee. He is very diligent and generally seems to enjoy his work. He recently welcomed a new baby into his family. You can see the glow in his eyes when he talks about his new baby girl. He has been coming in late or leaving early to go to doctors’ appointments and other family-related things during business hours, and is often working from his laptop during those appointments to ensure he gets his work completed. 


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This is the Activity #5 slide: Different Strokes for Different Folks.


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### Activity: Different Strokes for Different Folks [[1]](#footnote-1)

**PART 1**

Ask yourself these questions to gauge which job characteristics might best motivate your employees.

| **Job Characteristics** | **Is the employee likely to be satisfied with …** |
| --- | --- |
| Task Identity | The degree to which the job provides for completion of a whole and identifiable piece of work from beginning to end? |
| Task Significance | The difference he or she can make to others through the job?  The importance of the job compared to other jobs in the organization? |
| Autonomy | The level of independence and discretion allowed in making decisions about work sequence, methods, procedures, or quality control? |
| Skill Variety | The variety of knowledge, skills, and abilities required? |
| Feedback | * The clarity of performance expectations (for example, quality, timeliness)? * The availability of feedback about job performance? * The frequency of performance feedback? * Access to communication channels and flows of information? |

### Activity: Different Strokes for Different Folks, continued

**PART 2**

For each job characteristic noted in the first column, describe how much authority (i.e., No authority, Minimal authority, Some authority, or Full authority) you think you have to make modifications to each of them for your employees, as well as how you would go about modifying the job characteristic to enhance engagement.

In addition to keeping in mind the individual employees you manage, also think about the nature of the work your team usually performs, human resource policies, the needs of the organization, and the imperative to be fair, objective, and transparent while you consider modifying job characteristics.

| **Job Characteristics** | **How much authority do you have to modify this characteristic?** | **How would you modify the job characteristic?** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Task Identity |  |  |
| Task Significance |  |  |
| Autonomy |  |  |
| Skill Variety |  |  |
| Feedback |  |  |

This is the Activity #5 Summary slide.  It asks multiple questions based on what occurred in Activity #5.  Which job characteristics did you note as motivating your employees?  What changes would you make to better motivate each employee? What if you do not have the authority or the resources to make a particular change? What other job characteristics can you think of? What changes would you make to better motivate each employee? How much control do you think you have in making changes to these other job characteristics?


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## Leadership Styles

This is the second topic title slide of this lesson: Leadership Styles.


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This is the Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Styles slide.  Emotional Intelligence (knows as EI) is the ability to manage yourself and your relationships effectively. EI will help you to be more aware of the impact your leadership style is having on the engagement levels of your employees as well as on the organizational culture.  Use EI to help discern which leadership style is best in managing your employees and which style is most appropriate to respond to situations.  The five components of EI include: Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Motivation, Empathy, and Social skill.


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This is the Activity #6 slide: Matching Your Leadership Style to the Situation.


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### Activity: Matching your Leadership Style to the Situation

**Goleman’s Six Leadership Styles[[2]](#footnote-2)**

| **Characteristics** | **Coercive** | **Authoritative** | **Affiliative** | **Democratic** | **Pacesetting** | **Coaching** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Leader’s modus operandi | Demands immediate compliance | Mobilizes people towards a vision | Creates harmony and builds emotional bonds | Forgoes consensus via participation | Sets high standards for performance | Develops people for the future |
| The style in a phrase | ‘Do what I tell you’ | ‘Come with me’ | ‘People come first’ | ‘What do you think?’ | ‘Do as I do, now’ | ‘Try this’ |
| Underlying emotional Intelligence | Drive to achieve, initiative, self-control | Self-confidence, empathy, change catalyst | Empathy, building relationships, communication | Collaboration, team leadership, communication | Conscientious, drive to achieve, initiative | Developing others, empathy, self-awareness |
| When the style works best | In crisis; to kick start a turnaround; with problem employees | When changes require a new vision, or when a clear directive is needed | To heal rifts in a team or to motivate people during stressful circumstances | To build buy-in or consensus, or to get input from valuable employees | To get quick results from a highly motivated and competent team | To help an employee improve performance or develop long-term strengths |
| When the style might fail | When there is not a lot of emotional self-control | When trying to motivate more experienced experts or peers on the team | When there is avoidance of emotionally distressing situations | When there is a lot of listening and discussion but very little action | When very little guidance is given to the team on how to achieve results | When micromanaging |

### Activity: Matching your Leadership Style to the Situation, continued

**Instructions:** Below is a list of situations. For each situation, indicate which leadership style you would typically use and explain why this would be the most effective leadership style. Consider factors such as your underlying emotions, your goal in that situation, and the overall impact on the climate your style might have. Be prepared to share your responses during the follow-up discussion of this activity.

| **Situation** | **Response** |
| --- | --- |
| Agency leaders have formed a task force to uncover reasons for the low EVS engagement scores. They want at least one junior member from your team to be on the task force. However, none of your employees are interested in being on the task force. What leadership style do you use to assign an employee to the task force? |  |
| You have been assigned to lead the new employee engagement task force, but were given no guidance by senior leaders on how to proceed. What leadership style do you use to get buy-in from the task force? |  |
| Your task force is made up of members who do not know, or trust each other, and some members appear to be resistant to being on the task force. What leadership style to you use to ensure the work gets done? |  |
| The task force needs to quickly deliver and present their findings about reasons for the low EVS scores to agency leaders. What leadership style do you use to assign roles to the presenters? |  |
| Your task force presented recommendations to senior leadership. Some of your team had not prepared properly and the quality of the presentation suffered. What leadership style do you use to provide your team with performance feedback after the presentation? |  |
| As a result of the recommendations made by the committee, senior leaders have designated your work group to be part of a pilot test to try out new work procedures. You need all of your employees to buy into this plan as people are generally uncomfortable with change. What leadership style do you use to motivate your employees to participate? |  |

### Activity: Matching your Leadership Style to the Situation, continued

**Components of Emotional Intelligence**

| **EI Component** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| Self-awareness | * Self-confidence * Realistic self-assessment * Self-deprecating sense of humor * Thirst for constructive criticism |
| Self-regulation | * Trustworthiness * Integrity * Comfort with ambiguity and change |
| Motivation | * A passion for the work itself and for new challenges * Unflagging energy to improve * Optimism in the face of failure |
| Empathy | * Expertise in attracting and retaining talent * Ability to develop others * Sensitivity to cross-cultural differences |
| Social Skill | * Effectiveness in leading change * Persuasiveness * Extensive networking * Expertise in building and leading teams |

This is the Activity #6 Summary slide. Knowing and being able to switch leadership styles to match the situation to accomplish goals constitutes the most effective leadership.  Switching among the authoritative, affiliative, democratic, and coaching leadership styles helps build the best organizational climate and engagement to the organization.  Using the coercive and pacesetting leadership styles should be infrequent as these discourage employee input and initiative which have a negative impact on engagement and on the organizational climate.


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# Barriers to Engagement

This is the Lesson: Barriers to Engagement slide which is the fourth lesson of this course. Beneath the lesson title are the two lesson objectives: Recognize potential interpersonal barriers to employee engagement and Identify and understand potential organizational barriers to employee engagement.  All other lessons listed on the slide are grayed and include: Introduction, Factors that Influence Engagement, Matching Motivators to Individuals, Develop an Action Plan, and Conclusion.


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## Interpersonal Barriers

This is the first topic title slide of this lesson: Interpersonal Barriers.


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This is the Activity #7 slide: Your Interpersonal Barriers.


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### Activity: Your Interpersonal Barriers

Take a few moments to think about some of the interpersonal barriers that exist in your interactions with your employees. Use “I” statements to write down these barriers. For example:

* I have a hard time giving negative feedback.
* I don’t communicate because I assume my employees will handle issues on their own; I don’t want to seem like a micro-manager.

When you are finished writing these “I” statements, reflect on the impact these barriers have on your communication style and list solutions to minimize these barriers.

| **Your Interpersonal Barriers** | **Solutions to Interpersonal Barriers** |
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| I … |  |
| I … |  |
| I … |  |
| I … |  |
| I … |  |

This is the Activity #7 Summary slide. Supervisors are the most important element in employee retention.  People leave their supervisors, not the organization.  Social relationships affect feelings toward work and the organization. The relationship with a supervisor is one of the strongest influences in enhancing or hindering engagement.  Awareness of barriers that exist within your own interpersonal interactions with others is a good first step in being able to adopt appropriate strategies to have (more) effective interactions.  People do not always remember what you say or even what you do, but they always remember how you made them feel.” (Maya Angelou)


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This is the Activity #8 slide: Role Play Scenarios.


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### Activity: Role Play Action Plan

Based on the results from the EVS, develop a list of 2-3 actions to improve engagement in your department.

| **Specific Challenges** | **Proposed Action** | **Due Date** | **Resources (e.g., money, staff)** | **Communication (who should know)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I … |  |  |  |  |
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**Reflection Activity**

Thinking about your employees, how do you think interacting with them with your usual leadership style might be affecting their engagement with you, other team members, and the organization?

This is the Activity #8 Summary slide. For those who played Team Member Roles, on a scale of 1- 5, 1 being disengaged, 5 being highly engaged, how would you rate your level of engagement during the task? What contributed to your engagement?  How did you react to the leadership style of your supervisor?  If your real life supervisor exhibited these characteristics, what kinds of changes would you want them to make for you to feel more engaged in the task? For those who played Leader Roles, how effective do you think you were in developing the action plan while staying within the scope of your assigned style? What do you think made it effective or ineffective? What reactions did you see in your team members that indicated how your leadership style affected their level of engagement in the task? Did you observe any similarities in the reactions of your team members during this exercise to the behavior or reactions of any of your real employees?


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This is the Overcoming Your Interpersonal Barriers slide. Interpersonal relationships and communication have a great impact on engagement. Develop interpersonal relationships with your employees by: Getting to know their goals, work preferences, and personal styles; Paying attention to verbal cues (e.g., use appropriate tone and volume when speaking, do not interrupt or talk over a speaker), and nonverbal cues (e.g., use attentive body language, posture, eye contact) when communicating; Demonstrating high levels of EI by always being conscious of the potential effects of your behavior on others.  Use observations to make changes to your leadership style that would lead to better relationships with your employees and other organizational members.


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## Organizational Barriers

This is the second topic title slide of this lesson: Organizational Barriers.


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This is the Organizational Culture slide. Engaged employees put forth more discretionary effort and perform better, leading to improved agency performance.  Executives have a special responsibility to create and maintain the organizational culture so it is not only high-performing, but highly engaged.  Build a culture of engagement by: “Committing to a vision for engagement”, “Modeling an engaged behavior, attitude, and communication styles”, “Empowering supervisors and managers to perform well”, “Providing resources for employees to effectively do their jobs”, and “Developing procedures, policies, and systems that promote and drive engagement”.


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This is the Executive/Organizational Responsibilities slide. What is the current state of your agency in relation to each of the challenges?  What is the desired state for your agency?  What can you do to help close that gap and get the agency closer to the desired state?


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This is the Strategies to Drive Organizational Culture slide. Strategies from other Federal agencies to create and maintain a highly engaged culture include: “Being transparent at all levels”, “Reinforcing the mission, values and alignment of work to goals”, “Sharing your time with all employees”, “Developing and maintaining effective and relevant procedures and systems”, “Engaging in two-way communication”, “Fostering a culture of ongoing feedback”, and “Promoting continuous learning”.  Additional strategies can be found in several of the Job Aids in Section 2 of your Participant Guide.


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# Develop an Action Plan

This is the Lesson: Develop an Action Plan slide which is the fifth lesson of this course. Beneath the lesson title are the two lessons objectives: Identify actions you can take to develop and sustain an engagement culture and Identify actions you can take to overcome engagement barriers and improve engagement within your team.  All other lessons listed on the slide are grayed and include Introduction, Factors that Influence Engagement, Matching Motivators to Individuals,  Barriers to Engagement, and Conclusion.


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## Action Plan

This is the only topic title slide of this lesson: Action Plan.


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This is the What to Consider slide that lists the series of questions you should consider when developing an action plan. What are the specific challenges?  Who is the target (self, an individual, your team)?  What actions can you take in your role as supervisor, manager, or executive?  What resources or support do you need (e.g., staffing, training, opportunities outside the work unit)?
Who do you need to communicate with to make it work (boss, employee, group, HR)?  How will you know you have broken a barrier? What are the criteria for success?


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This is the Activity #9 slide: Develop Your Action Plan.


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### Activity: Develop Your Action Plan

For this final activity you will indicate specific actions you will take to overcome engagement barriers and improve levels of engagement among your employees. Think about the level of engagement you want to achieve for yourself and your team in the near term (i.e., 6 months to a year) and long-term (i.e., within 1 to 2 years). You will identify at least 3 specific engagement challenges and develop a plan of action for each. The challenges do not have to be listed in order of priority. Refer to the notes you have taken throughout this course to give you some ideas, such as factors that keep you engaged, the results of your assessment of your primary management style, things that you identified as organizational barriers, strategies from other government agencies, as well as any other notes from the rest of the slides and other activities. You will document this in the table on the next page.

Account for the following factors when developing a comprehensive action plan:

* Specific challenge related to engagement
* Target (self, individual, or group)
* Actions you can take within your role as a supervisor or manager
* Resources you will need (e.g., staffing, training, opportunity outside work unit)
* Communication plan - who to talk with to make this work (boss, employee, group, HR/HCM)
* Completion -you must be prudent in following up with your action plan and marking off successes

After identifying at least 3 specific challenges and actions you are going to take to address them, you may share some of the details of your Action Plans—within your comfort level—with the rest of the class. The class will provide feedback and suggestions for addressing the challenges.

#### Your Action Plan

| **Challenge** | **Target** | **Action to be Taken** | **Due Date** | **Resources (e.g., money, staff)** | **Communication (who should know)** | **Completed (yes/no)** |
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# Conclusion

This is the Lesson: Conclusion slide which is the last lesson of this course. All other lessons listed on the slide are grayed and include Introduction, Factors that Influence Engagement, Matching Motivators to Individuals,  Barriers to Engagement, and Develop an Action Plan.


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This is the Objectives Covered slide.  It lists the course objectives  Recognize factors that influence employee engagement, Understand the importance of matching motivators to individuals, Recognize potential barriers to engagement, and 
Identify actions you can take to develop and sustain a culture of engagement.


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This is the Supplemental Resource slide.  It describes a companion web-based training (WBT) course “Maximizing Employee Engagement”.  This WBT is a 60-minute online course to help you increase and sustain employee engagement within your organizations. It is based upon MSPB’s 2008 report “The Power of Federal Employee Engagement,” the Employee Engagement Index of the FEVS, and current research and best practices in employee engagement.


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| Section 2: Job Aids |
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## Job Aid: Debunking Myths about Employee Engagement[[3]](#footnote-3)

| **Myth** | **Reality** |
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| Compensation is the biggest driver of employee engagement | * Compensation is important, but not a main driver of employee engagement. * A sense of purpose about why the agency exists and its contribution to society is a bigger driver for employees than compensation. * A sense of participation with the agency (e.g., recognition and rewards, opportunities to grow, and involvement) is a bigger driver for employees than compensation. |
| The drivers of engagement are the same across agencies | * Drivers of employee engagement across various organizations are more different than they are similar, even if they are within the same industry. * Each agency's culture differs and drivers at your agency may not be drivers at another because of the differences in organizational culture, work focus, and types of employees. |
| Employee engagement is hosting an event every now and then | Effective employee engagement should be in everything the agency does; it must be integrated and embedded into the agency’s strategic planning, HR and talent management planning, organizational culture and values, and so on. |
| The best agency leaders are all great at inspiring employees | The best agency leaders might not necessarily be viewed as the most inspirational leaders. However, they have the capability to ensure employees have the right resources and tools to perform their jobs consistently and get the best results (e.g., engagement, performance, retention) from their employees. |
| Employee engagement is HR’s responsibility | * HR's role is to help managers maximize engagement with their teams by providing tools, resources, and talking points that enable managers to have meaningful conversations with their employees. * Employee engagement happens on every level, must be owned by everyone in the organization, and must start at the top and filter through the agency. * Employee engagement defines the success (or downfall) of an entire company. An engaged workforce is a major factor in achieving agency goals. * Paying (more) attention to engagement is time well spent, even for the busiest executive, manager, and supervisor. |

## Job Aid: Ways to Create a Culture of Engagement

The following are quick actions and the ways to execute those actions to help create a culture of engagement in your organization.

| **Action** | **How to Create a Culture of Engagement** |
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| Instill a sense of pride in the work or workplace | * Use the performance management process to communicate to employees how their work contributes to achieving agency objectives. Performance meetings provide an opportunity to establish an alignment between the employee's role and the agency mission and goals. * Encourage employees to take ownership of their work. |
| Create a sense of trust and transparency with leadership | * Communicate a clear vision of how the agency will accomplish its mission. * Communicate honestly about the organization and ensure your words are consistent with your actions. * Ensure there is transparency between decisions and the strategic direction of the organization. |
| Provide the opportunity to perform well at work | * Provide frequent informal or formal performance feedback and discussions. * Hold employees accountable for results through a structured performance management process. * Ensure that employees' job responsibilities make good use of their competencies and that they are provided with the resources, time, and assistance needed to perform their jobs. |
| Provide reward and recognition consistently and frequently | * Take time to validate and acknowledge employee achievements. * Integrate rewards and recognition into how employees are managed on a day-to-day basis. |
| Provide opportunities for personal and professional growth | * Demonstrate an interest in developing and mentoring employees. * Help employees assess, fine-tune, and develop new skills. * Give employees specific goals as well as the training, tools, and resources for employees to perform their job. * Use a competency-based approach to ensure their skills are well-used and continually enhanced. |
| Create a positive work environment that also focuses on teamwork | * Create opportunities for team members to interact and work together. * Actively solicit feedback and satisfaction and incorporate their thoughts and ideas into the agency operation. |

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## Job Aid: Fast Track to Lowering Engagement[[4]](#footnote-4)

The following are some of the quickest ways to lower engagement amongst your employees.

* Failing to provide transparent and trustworthy senior leadership.
* Failing to communicate openly, frequently, and effectively with employees about organizational challenges, as well as organizational achievements.
* Failure to have open two-way communication with the workforce, to include communicating with employees as a group and on an individual basis.
* Failing to include and solicit feedback from employees in developing strategies and recommendations for agency improvements.
* Failing to have senior leaders take an active interest in EVS results and develop agency-wide and office plans for improvements.
* Failing to empower employees to be innovative and find ways to better perform their jobs.
* Failing to provide the right tools and resources for employees to effectively do their jobs.
* Failing to communicate a clear vision of the agency's mission and helping employees see line-of-sight between their work and the agency's mission.
* Failing to provide opportunities for career advancement and provide greater responsibilities or new experiences.
* Failing to recognize and acknowledge good work.
* Failing to appropriately reward or promote employees.
* Failing to include employee engagement as a performance metric in managers' performance plans.
* Failing to incorporate team problem-solving and decision-making, especially where it affects them.
* Failing to tailor engagement efforts to the culture/climate of your agency.

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## Job Aid: Other Government Agencies’ Strategies to Drive an Engaged Organizational Culture

The following government agencies shared with OPM what they do to maximize employee engagement within their organizations:

* Department of Education (ED)
* Department of Human Services (DHS)
* National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
* National Institutes of Health (NIH)
* Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)
* Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
* Office of Personnel Management (OPM)
* United States Coast Guard (USCG)

While not all of these will work within your agency because of the different organizational culture (e.g., mission, union), you should still be able to find a few ideas that will be well-suited and relatively easy to adopt and practice within your team. Implementing these or similar ideas could have a positive influence on your agency's engagement levels, and ultimately, FEVS engagement scores.

**Employees**

| **Ideas Involving Employees** | **What it looks like** |
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| Create a “Morale Committee” | Create a committee that develops and enacts ideas to make staff feel appreciated (e.g., promoting health and wellness activities, providing non-monetary rewards). |
| Recognize Other Staff | Encourage staff to nominate coworkers for good work. Employees select who wins the awards, which promotes a sense of pride by being nominated by their peers. |
| Practice the Servant Leadership Model | Focus on helping others and modeling good leadership. |
| Get Together Outside Work | Schedule activities such as bowling, and movies to help bring teams together. |

**Supervisors and Managers**

| **Activities Supervisors and Managers Can Do** | **What it looks like** |
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| Create Teambuilding Activities | Many offices hold division level retreats and seminars that include all divisional staff. These meetings typically focus on topics of interest to the division and often include segments that are used to identify ways to improve the operation of the organization. |
| Bring Food into the Equation | Supervisors or managers bring in food (e.g., pizza, cupcakes) for employees during group meetings. Managers take their staff out for lunch just because they want to; staff can see that the manager enjoys doing it and that it is authentic and not forced. |
| Develop and Monitor Individual Development Plans (IDPs) | As part of the performance process, employees and their supervisors discuss their IDPs. This includes discussing goals, performance expectations, and things they will do throughout the year. |
| Give Employees the Opportunity to Select their Own Assignments | Encourage employees to express interest in and volunteer to work on specific projects. |
| Encourage and Model Work-life Balance | Managers model this by not always staying late or always working on weekends. They also publicly support work-life programs such as telework, Employee Assistance Program (EAP), or health and fitness programs, as appropriate. |
| Create Lateral and Rotational Assignments | Staff is frequently assigned collateral duties on teams, working groups, and steering committees that allow the individual to work on tasks that are outside their routine. These assignments are helpful in instilling ownership, inclusion, and a sense of collaboration for the staff and their respective offices. |
| Take Opportunities to Provide Positive Feedback | Give positive reinforcement and feedback. |

**Executives’ Actions**

| **Actions Executives Can Take** | **What it looks like** |
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| Set up Monthly Focus Groups to have “Diversity Dialogues” | Focus on dialogues about age, race, gender, disability, etc. for employees to become more knowledgeable about differences and similarities in behaviors, communication styles, values, etc., as well as become more comfortable with different types of employees. |
| Encourage Leaders to be More Visible and Accessible | Walk around the office, be seen, and make eye contact. Demonstrate the organization’s values and competent, approachable, and personable leadership. Have a monthly “Coffee with an Executive” or “Lunch with an Executive” that offers an opportunity for participants to discuss a list of current questions/issues. |
| Develop an “Idea Factory” to Solicit Ideas from Employees | Set up an automated system to actively solicit ideas about ways to improve organizational challenges from employees, where one employee can build on what another suggests. Some agencies recognize employees who have provided ideas by having senior leaders introduce them during town halls and ask them to describe their ideas to everyone. Senior leaders sign on to act as champions for the ideas, which helps break down communication and accessibility barriers between leaders and employees. |
| Provide Guidance on Effective Performance Management Systems | Assist leaders and employees to learn more about how to make the most of the performance management process. One agency developed a booklet that presents role plays and frequently asked questions that can help both the employee and the supervisor get into the mode for performance appraisal and discussion about developmental opportunities. Agency-sponsored workshops for supervisors or managers also provide an opportunity for them to learn how to recognize and reward employees. |
| Create a Monthly Newsletter | Solicit input from employees about both official and personal events (e.g., voluntary efforts or commemorative events) to include in a newsletter. |
| Host Quarterly/Yearly Town Halls | Use town halls and all-hands meetings to keep employees informed and to obtain input from them. |

**Executives’ Strategies**

| **Strategies for Executives** | **What it looks like** |
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| Advertise and Promote the Mission and Values of the Organization | Create unrehearsed videos in which employees state what the organizational values mean to them. Display quotes on a banner at the entrance of the building along with the mission and values of the organization. |
| Create a Clear and Open Communication Strategy | Hold staff meetings soon after senior staff meetings. This helps control flow of information rather than contributing to rumors, and establishes consistent and open communication. |
| Practice Situational Leadership Approach | Have the most knowledgeable person about an issue in the room present to others, rather than have the most senior person do it. |
| Develop an “Innovation Lab” | Hold sessions used to tackle organizational issues, emphasizing innovation and creating energy among employees. Other departments are invited to join, and any employee can be a facilitator. |
| Create a “Solicitations of Interest” System | Set up an internal system where supervisors who need extra staff can ask for it. Half-page announcements are emailed to employees weekly so they can see what work is coming up and apply for it. Employees can apply directly for the work; they do not need to go to HR for a formal assignment. Assignment length may range from a couple of months to six months. They can also be part time, such as two hours a week for two months. |
| Encourage Employees to Develop Action Plans to Respond to FEVS Results | Form Advisory Teams of employees to determine how to address the areas identified by survey results as needing improvement. Employees develop action plans for specific areas; they collect information/data and assist in the implementation of the response. Senior leaders keep employees updated on progress (via agency-wide conference calls, town halls, newsletters, emails, etc.). |
| Emphasize Continuous Learning | Leadership supports a proactive, assertive, leaning forward attitude and provides continual training and development to employees, through formal training, developmental assignments, details, and lateral assignments to new positions. |
| Encourage Managers to Get Together and “Talk” | Supervisors and managers meet with each other, and then meet with managers at the level above them on a monthly basis to discuss topics of interest. Any relevant information from these meetings is then fed back to the staff to increase the sharing of information. |
| Encourage Honest Conversations Between Supervisors and Employees | Encourage honest conversations about what the supervisor can do to make the employee want to contribute his or her best talent. Honesty can increase feeling of trustworthiness and make employees feel that their supervisor has their best interest at heart and will not use information shared in confidence against them. |

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## Job Aid: Alternative Non-monetary Ways to Encourage Training and Development[[5]](#footnote-5)

Encourage inquiry and a sense of constant curiosity

* Encourage a seminar series that provides opportunities for employees to give presentations about their various areas of expertise to other employees.
* Collaborate with other managers to act as panel experts for discussions or presentations and lend knowledge to panel discussions on various topics. Invite employees to these forums, allowing them to ask questions and gain new knowledge.
* Encourage employees to spend time interviewing other employees or managers in other sectors about their work. Dedicate a specific number of hours each quarter to allow your employees to conduct these informational interviews.

Encourage service and volunteerism

* Encourage employees to volunteer within their communities to further develop their particular skill sets, and also develop leadership skills by taking on leadership roles within their communities.

Encourage inter-departmental learning

* Promote resources already available in the organization by inviting employees who have a variety of skill sets or belong to other offices to collaborate and work on projects together.
* Organize informal interdepartmental get-togethers during lunch, breaks, or brown bag sessions to discuss, build relationships, and build communities of practice.

Encourage Employees to find a mentor

* Talk to your employees to find out which of them are interested in mentoring or even job shadowing. Then think about who would make good matches to provide both parties with developmental opportunities.
* Be a facilitator in helping employees form relationships with other individuals, such as supervisors, managers, or executives you have access to.
* Use mentoring to get older and younger employees talking, such as sharing knowledge and ideas and combining perspectives in new and interesting ways.

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| Section 3: Supplemental Reading and References |
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