# How to increase employee engagement in 2020

[00:00:00] Welcome to the All-in manager podcast. I'm your host Ali. You're in the right place. If you want to become a better boss today

[00:00:12]

[00:00:12] Folks I've been spending a lot of time this week, going through some  really interesting data and research on how employees are really feeling in the workplace. If you're an employee, if you're a manager right now, this one's for you. I do come bearing bad news unfortunately. I got to tell you folks, the [00:00:30] picture that I'm getting reading and really studying this data is not pretty.

[00:00:35]

[00:00:35]There's a lot of numbers I'm going to throw your way. So hopefully you can keep up. What I'll do is I'll share the data that I'm referencing in the show notes. So you have access to it as well.

[00:00:47] So before we start to talk about specific data, I want to share three overarching findings that the data is  clear on :

[00:00:56] The first insight we're seeing is that managers need [00:01:00] more help than they're getting right now. Managers are struggling across the board. And  this seems to be getting worse as time goes by.

[00:01:09] The second insight is also pretty depressing. The trust gap between employers and employees seems to be widening as this pandemic rages on. And then the third insight isn't great, either.

[00:01:28] The third insight talks [00:01:30] about the fact that burnout and exhaustion is real. However, burnout and exhaustion is not  impacting the workforce equally.

[00:01:42] There are certain segments of the workforce that are getting targeted a little more than some other sectors. So lets talk a little bit about that  as well.

[00:01:54] So let's dive into the first insight, which is the fact that managers [00:02:00] need help.  I'm going to be referencing  a McKinsey report that just dropped two weeks back.

[00:02:06] And what the report is showing is there is a big disconnect between what companies are telling their managers to do and what managers are actually doing. So here's some data, 73% of the companies that were surveyed  asked their managers to check in weekly with their direct reports to make sure [00:02:30] that work was manageable.

[00:02:33] However, only 39% of the employees have reported that their managers actually checked in with them. Let me repeat this 73% of the companies asked their managers to check in with their direct reports to make sure work is manageable or whether they needed something. However, Only 39% of the employees said [00:03:00] that my manager checked in, but me.

[00:03:02] So there's a big disconnect. There's a big gap between what companies want their managers to do and what managers are actually doing. In the same vein 68% of the companies surveyed also asked their managers to check in weekly with their direct reports to inquire about their mental wellbeing. However, only 37% of employees have reported that their manager has [00:03:30] actually asked them about their mental wellbeing.

[00:03:34] Again, big disconnect, less than 40% of the managers are actually checking in on the wellbeing and workload of their people. Now, if I saw this data say pre COVID, I would have been disappointed, but the 40%, I think is abysmal, but I've would have been like, okay. About 40 to 50 to 60 is, is almost the average, unfortunately, but man, during a [00:04:00] pandemic we need to do better.

[00:04:02] Managers need to do better. I would love to see this data in the eighties. Or in the nineties. So the question is, how do we really get better? How do we support our managers so they can start doing these weekly check ins. number one, I think employers need to get a little more intentional with training.

[00:04:23] And when I talk about training, I'm not just talking about training their managers on how they can be doing one [00:04:30] on ones. I think that's incredibly important. But employers also need to train managers on why they should be doing one-on-ones. What is the importance behind connecting individually with their direct reports?

[00:04:44]The second point in my opinion is equally, if not more important, in addition to training is that leaders should be modeling this behavior.

[00:04:55] You know, just saying something is important, but I want to see [00:05:00] leaders actually. Walk the walk. I want leaders to start doing one-on-ones with their direct reports. So who's listening right now. I would love for you to start meeting with your SVPs, your chief operating officer home ever on a one on one basis.

[00:05:17] So other people in your organization start to take notes as well. I think leaders do a good job of. Talking about this, but they don't do a great job at [00:05:30] times of modeling their behavior.

[00:05:33] I think one-on-one, they're extremely important if you're a long time listener of mine, you know, you've probably heard of. Couple of my podcasts, specifically talking about them, importance of one on ones.

[00:05:45] I link in the show notes, but if you're not doing one on ones right now, the data is crystal clear on the importance of doing these specific meetings. So my hope is you started doing one-on-one. If you're struggling to do a [00:06:00] one-on-one check out the podcast or reach out to me

[00:06:02]the second insight talks about the fact that the trust gap seems to be widening between employer and employee. So this time I'm going to be referencing a different study. This is IBM and Oxford.

[00:06:16] they interviewed 3,400 leaders and more than 50,000 employees and the data is actually scary. So. 74% of employers believe that [00:06:30] they are doing a good job, helping their teams learn the skills to work  or to cope with COBIT 74% of the employers are saying that they're doing that. However, only 38% of employees agree with that statement.

[00:06:48] That's crazy  80 per cent of the employers are saying that they believe the organization is supporting the physical and emotional health outfits workforce. But when you ask the same question to [00:07:00] employees, only 46% of the employees agree that the organization is supporting the physical and emotional health of its workforce.

[00:07:09] Another stat, which is pretty alarming is  that 86% of the organization believes that it's providing clear guidelines and expectations for how the organization will work. During 20, 20, 86% of the employers feel that they're doing a good job of explaining guidelines to their people. [00:07:30] However, only 51% of employees agree with this statement.

[00:07:34] So it's pretty clear that employees and employers are not aligned on these critical initiatives. So how do we get better? Well, leaders need to double down on the clarity of their communication, not just the [00:08:00] frequency of their communication. See it matters if you repeat your message, but what is the point?

[00:08:07] If your message is not clear? So you want to start to double down, especially HR departments need to start doubling down on the clarity off the message. Here's another thing. And this is specifically if you're an HR leader. Employee HR needs to clarify what types of benefits [00:08:30] are available for or to their employees.

[00:08:34] Almost 50% of employees don't know what is  available to them as part of their benefits packet. So again, this could be an employee issue. Absolutely. An employee might not have read up on what is available to them. However  I want to put the onus on HR a little bit. Your HR needs to [00:09:00] communicate this message in an interesting and any compelling manner.

[00:09:07] I've been talking to a couple of HR leaders and what they're doing is they are creating virtual office hours where you can just log into zoom at a particular time. And you can ask any question you want to, I know of another startup,  which has created a Slack channel for benefits, where.

[00:09:26] HR is  available and people can Slack in their [00:09:30] questions and HR can either answer them on Slack or they can jump on an individual call so that this person's privacy is  protected. So there are a lot of ways in which we can align. On the messaging. I keep telling leaders. It doesn't matter if you've said it once a lot of leaders telling me, Hey man, I've communicated.

[00:09:54] I had a meeting or I emailed, you gotta keep [00:10:00] reading and forcing the message, but you gotta reinforce the message in a clear and in a compelling. Fashion reinforcement is incredibly important, but what's the point. If you're reinforcing more confusion, so get better on the frequency, but try to emphasize on the clarity, half the content as best as possible.

[00:10:26] Okay. So the third insight is about burnout and exhaustion. [00:10:30] And what the data is telling us is that burnout and exhaustion is rampant right now. However, it's also not impacting everyone equally. So let me share some of the data , this data is coming courtesy of McKinsey and McKinsey asked a number of companies and employees, this question.

[00:10:46] And here's the question in the last few months, which of the. Following, have you consistently felt at work? Let me repeat the question in the last few months, which of the following have you [00:11:00] consistently felt at work and here at word, the options? one is I felt excluded. The second one is I was pressured to work more.

[00:11:09] Third is I'm burned out. The fourth is I am exhausted. Okay. So. the number one response that popped up is exhausted. And the number two response that popped up is I am burnt out. , not surprising data here, burnout and exhaustion is something that all of [00:11:30] us are feeling. However, would the data also shed some light on was that senior level women and black women.

[00:11:38] Are experiencing the highest amount of burnout and the highest amount of exhaustion. Which begs the question, huh? How do we start to combat this burnout and this exhaustion? So I have three opinions here that I want to share with you. Number one, companies need to [00:12:00] start giving more wellness days for its employees.

[00:12:03] And when I talk about a wellness day, I mean, giving a Friday off for people to recuperate or giving a Monday off for people to just recharge their batteries. I'm hearing of a lot of companies that are starting to do that. A lot of startups are saying, Hey, we're going to start giving every other Friday off or one Friday, a month off.

[00:12:23] However, I think companies need to do a. Better job for the companies that are giving wellness [00:12:30] days. That's amazing I am really happy to hear that, but the companies that are not doing it at this point, I would love for more companies to start doing this as well. The other thing companies need to do again is train their managers.

[00:12:44] Yours do help their employees with. Prioritizing their projects, folks, the data is crystal clear here. When managers help their employees prioritize projects, everyone does [00:13:00] better. We are exhausted and veer burnt out because. You know, there's a lot of political unrest. There's a lot of social unrest.

[00:13:09] Obviously we're going through a pen day. I make be still have so much on our plate as far as work is concerned. And I think that's a lever, which is a little flexible than all other things that are going around. I think managers. Can help take some pressure off their employees [00:13:30] as far as workloads are concerned.

[00:13:31] Now I know it's not easy. I, I hear you. It is not easy to take projects off someone's plate, but it is worth a try. So I'm encouraging managers to get their employees to at least have a conversation around priorities. I think having the conversation is a good signal to start moving in the right direction.

[00:13:57] The other thing companies need to start doing, and some [00:14:00] companies that are already doing this by the way is they need to start adjusting their goals and OKR, what was possible pre COVID might not be attainable in this climate. I think companies need to start realizing that. And when I say some of these goals might be unattainable, I am in no way implying that we are giving up on these goals.

[00:14:27] I'm not saying to give up on goals. What I'm [00:14:30] saying is we might need to defer some these goals if possible  so that we are in the right frame of mind. Mine to attack these projects,  we'll have to slow down so we can speed up. We need to help our employees catch their breath literally and figuratively.

[00:14:52] So I really think companies need to start looking into their own KRS and they need to start adjusting. Some of their [00:15:00] OKR is here. So employees feel a little relieved in the process. So the big three findings, I know not a lot of great news here, but you know, there's not a whole lot of doom and gloom as well.

[00:15:16] I've been advising a lot of the leaders that these problems are serious, but they're not insurmountable. but one thing is for certain, these problems are not going to go away [00:15:30] anytime soon, if we don't have the willingness or the ability take action, we have to start taking action.

[00:15:39] Action could mean training our managers, action could mean leading by example or action could mean just starting to have authentic conversations with our employees. and doing a good job of listening to them. Sometimes you don't even have to do a lot. Sometimes all our employees want is [00:16:00] someone who can listen to what it is that they're going through.

[00:16:05] I'm going to share the visuals in the show notes. So you can see  the data for yourself, a link to the McKinsey report as well. And if you want, you can share that. With your leaders, I've highlighted the rule for you. It's a really long report.

[00:16:23] It's 60 pages, but I've highlighted the report for you. So, so you have that and if you're a leader or I would [00:16:30] strongly encourage you to encourage you to read the report. And if you're not, I would still encourage you to read the report and, or shared the report with, You know, the head of HR or video your video manager?

[00:16:43] Well, that's all we have for today. Folks, if you like this podcast, please subscribe on iTunes. Or if you're on Spotify, follow me on Spotify. You'll find this podcast and all. Podcast apps.  when you subscribe on iTunes or if you follow me on Spotify, [00:17:00] it helps other managers, like you find this valuable content,  until next time, see ya.