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The Definitive Series:  
**Employee  
Engagement**  
Executive Summary

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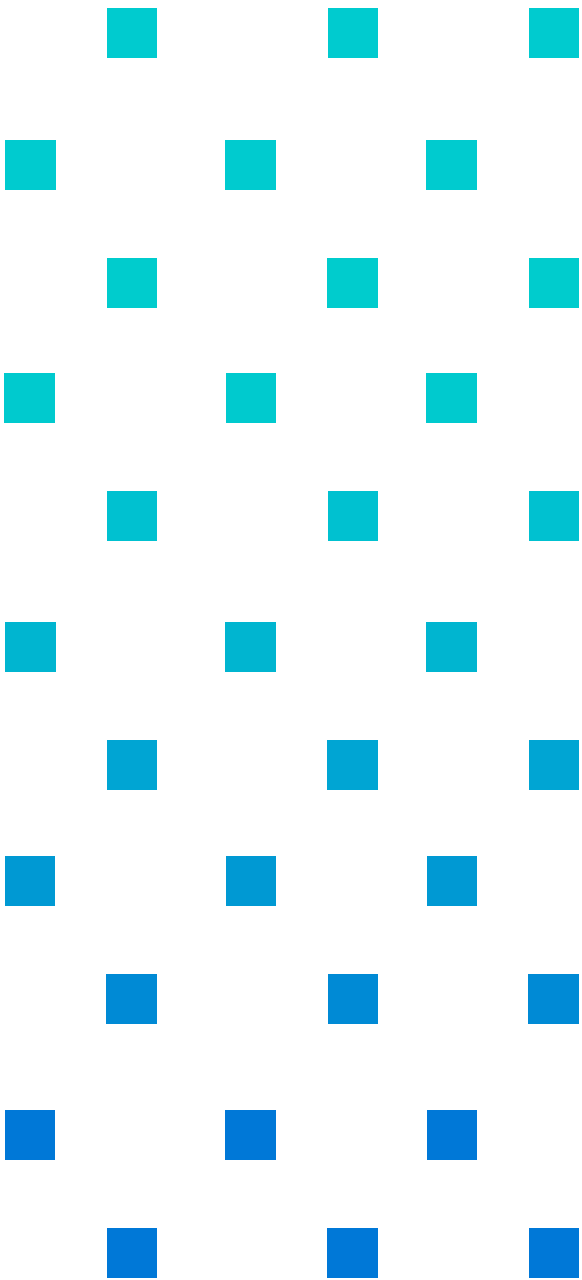
Dr. Mary Hayes and Marcus Buckingham

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# Executive Summary

In the overall report, we describe what the research and practitioner communities have learned about employee engagement over the last three decades. Our aim in the larger report is to summarize all available research from both the academic and practitioner communities so that organizations can build their engagement efforts on the foundation of the best possible intelligence.

In this brief executive summary, we pull out the ten relevant conclusions. Data contained in this executive summary is from client specific research and the global engagement study completed through the ADP Research Institute.



# What is Engagement?

For the purposes of this research paper, we are using this definition of employee engagement: **the emotional state of mind that causes people to do their best work, sustainably.**

Our definition of engagement — **the emotional state of mind that causes people to do their best work, sustainably** — provides us not only with a coherent thesis about what engagement is, but also shows us the means by which we can confirm or reject the core elements of engagement. And once the core elements have been identified, it also gives us the means to prove — or disprove — that increases in engagement lead to increases in performance and decreases in voluntary turnover.

# Why Do We Care About Engagement of the Workforce?

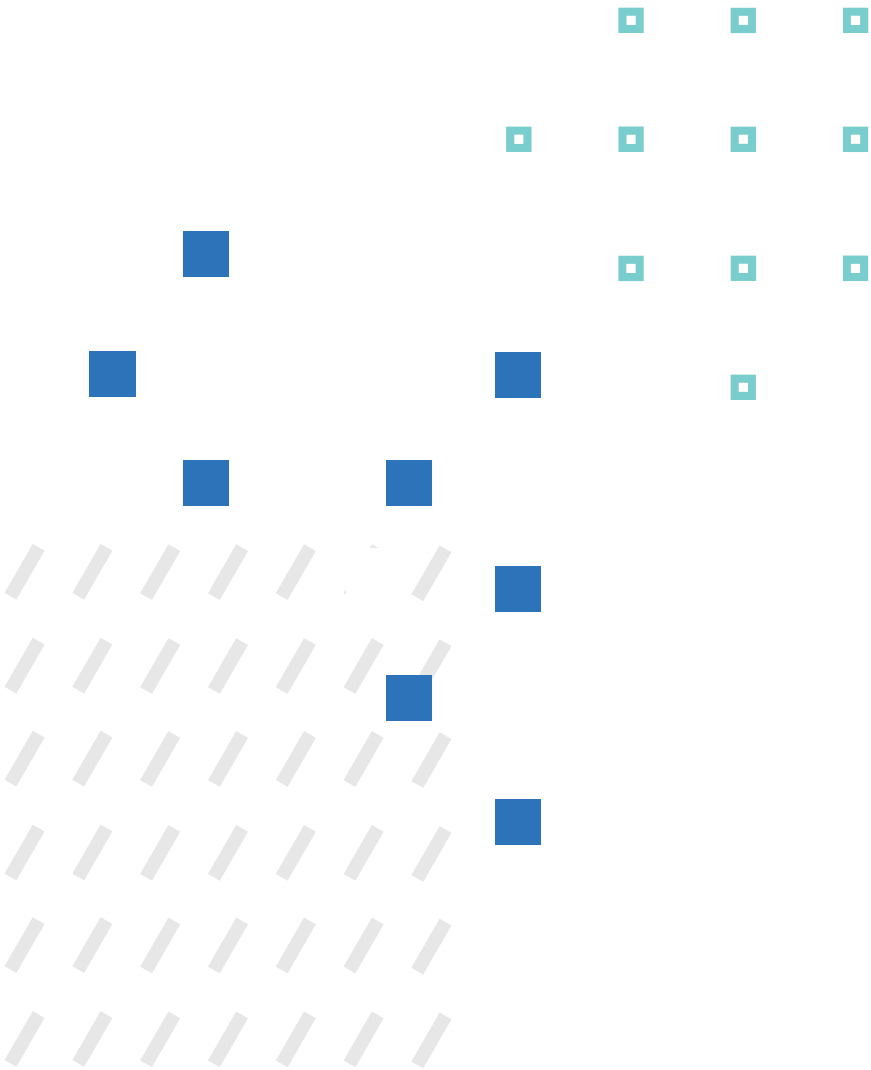
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Engagement can be measured and does vary over time by individual. Engagement is not static but a gauge to be used by team leaders to understand their teams. Engagement is linked to many productive employee behaviors and outcomes.





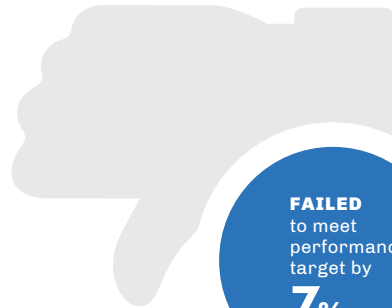
# What We Know



# 1

## Engagement drives performance and retention.

Individuals who report higher levels of engagement wind up selling more.



**FAILED**  
to meet  
performance  
target by  
**7%.**



**EXCEEDED**  
performance  
target by  
**4%.**

**32%**  
of those who  
voluntarily  
terminate are  
**FULLY ENGAGED.**



**41%**  
of those who  
remain with a  
company are  
**FULLY ENGAGED.**

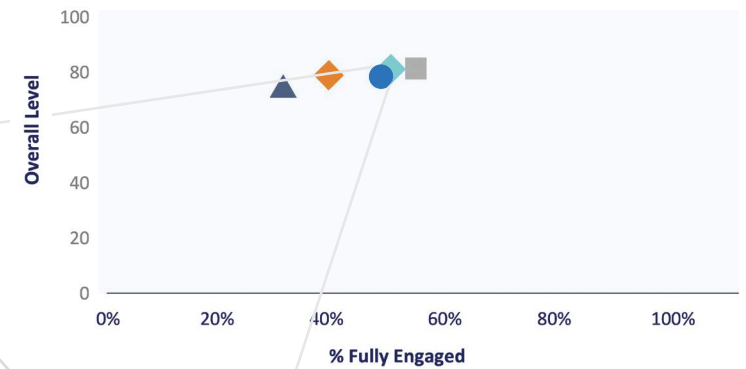
Engaged employees are more likely to stay with an organization.

# 2

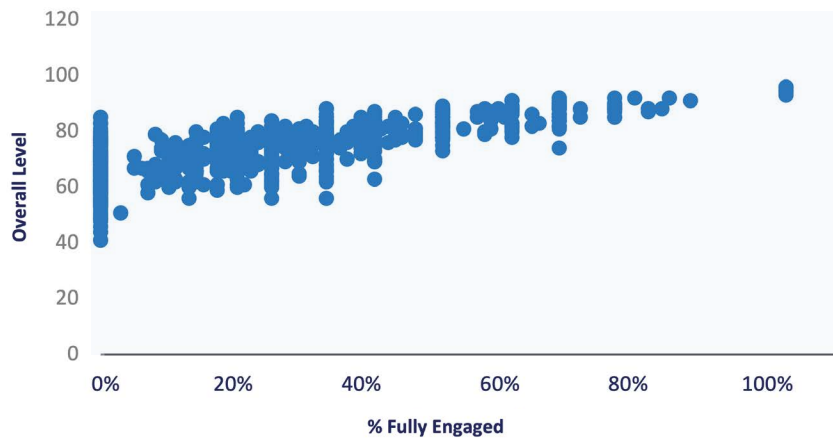
Engagement varies most *within* an organization, team-by-team.

To drive engagement, an organization will be best served by focusing on where engagement is created or destroyed: the team.

Aggregated engagement levels of five companies



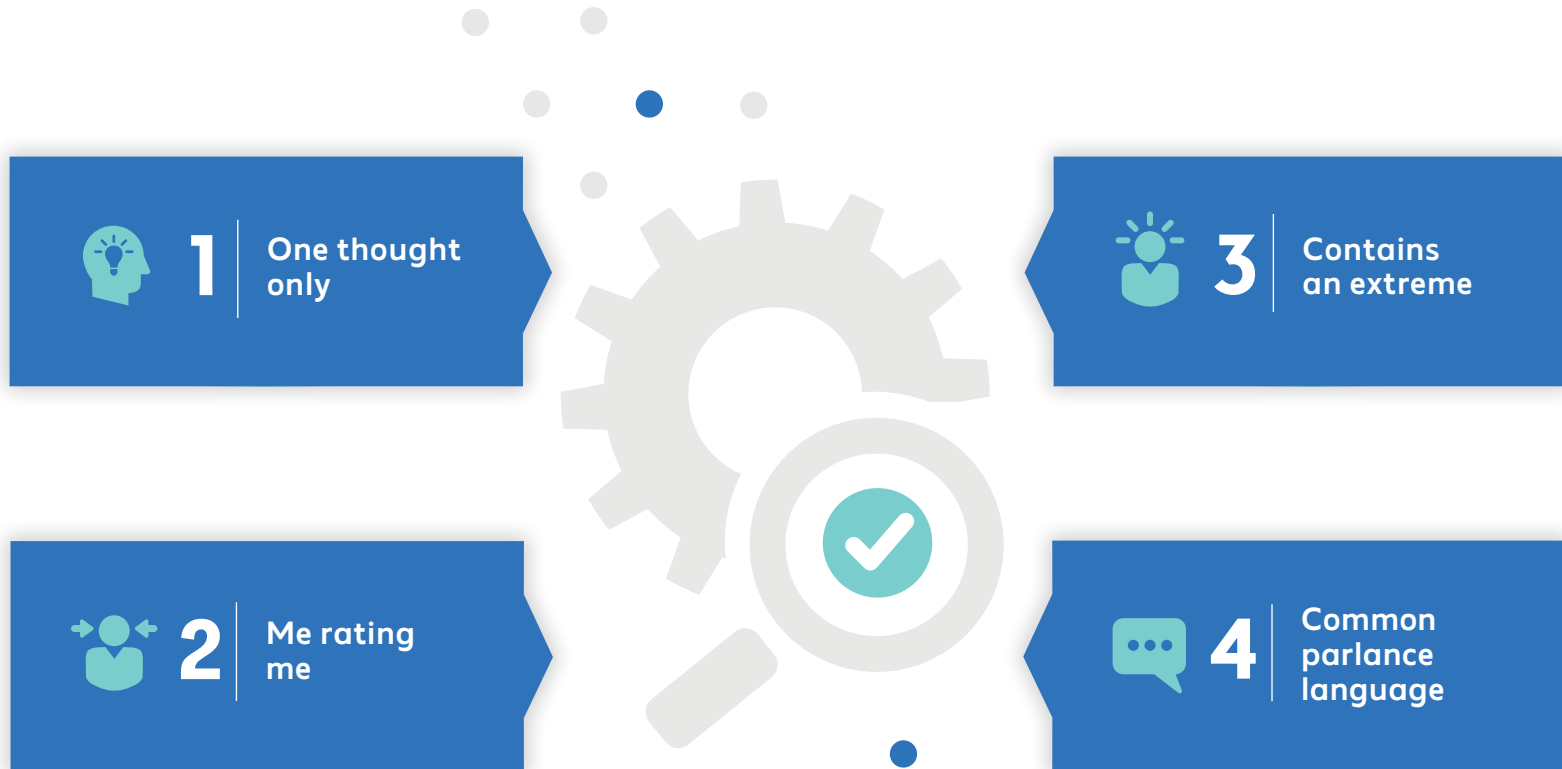
Aggregated engagement levels of each team within Company 1



There is **greater variation** inside one particular organization than between two different organizations.

# 3

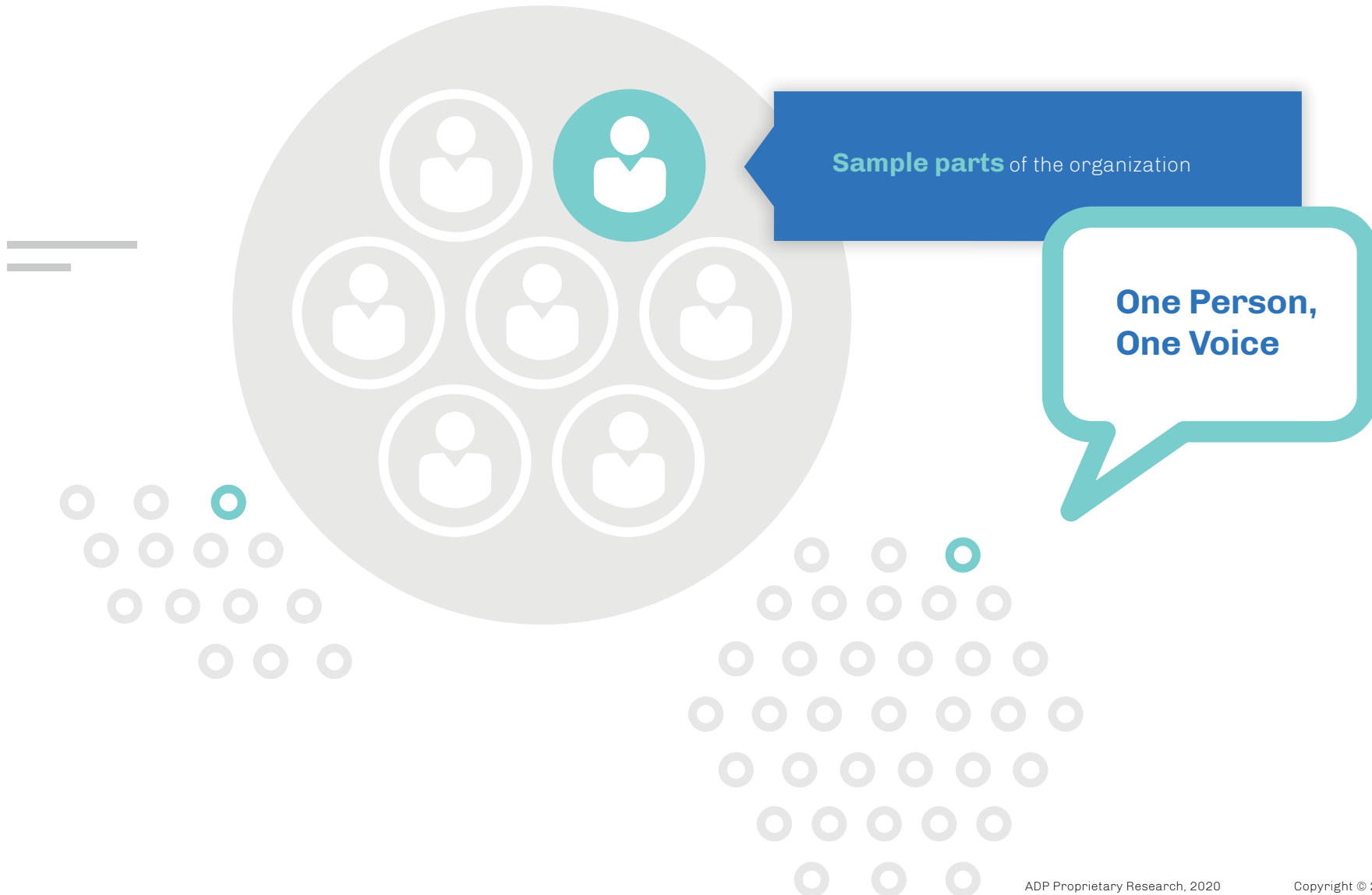
Engagement items that do not have the four crucial characteristics will have limited measurement value.





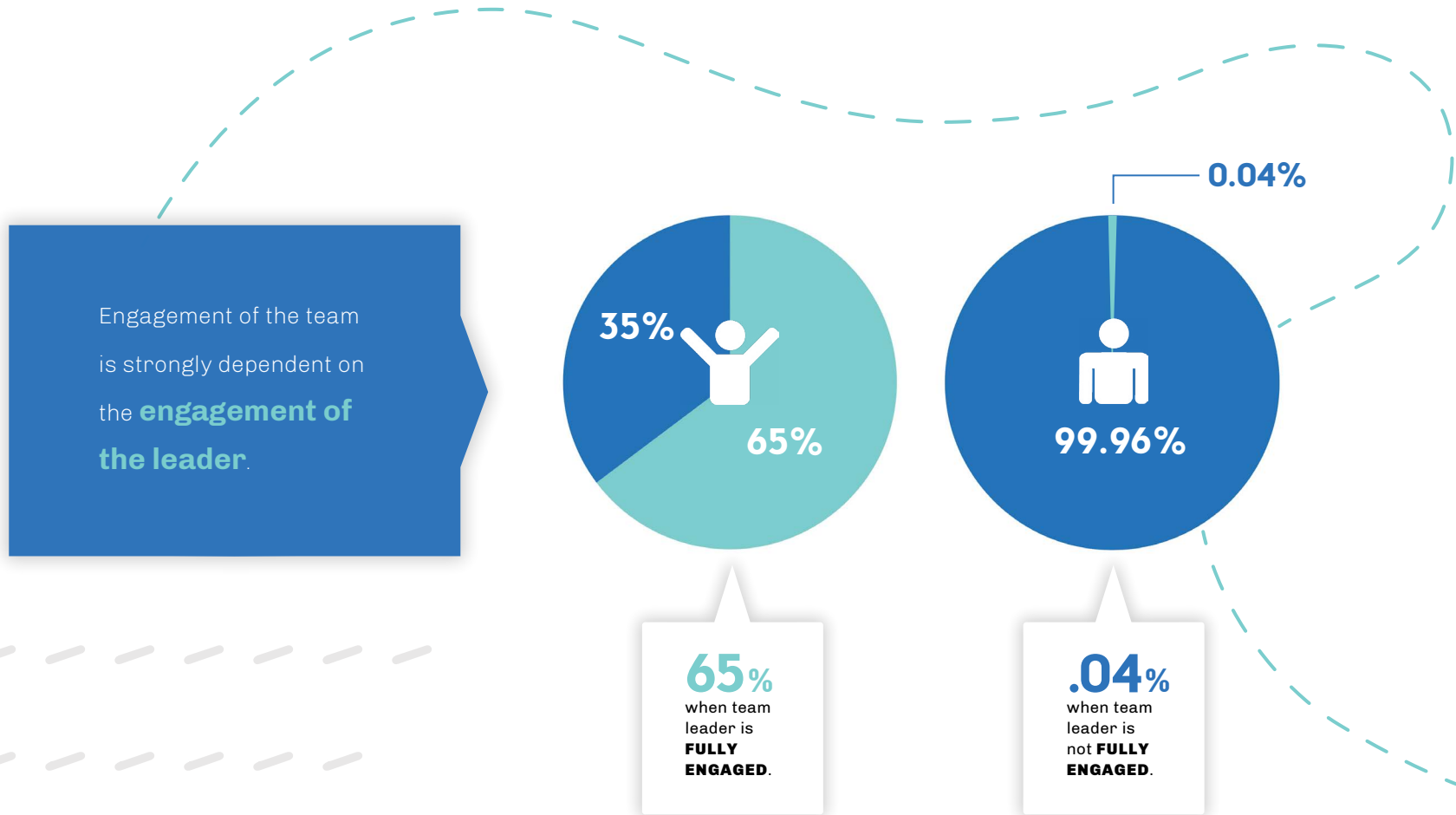
# 4

Organizations should not use sampling methodology to measure engagement – there is too much variance inside a particular organization for sampling to be helpful. It serves only to mask what is actually happening.



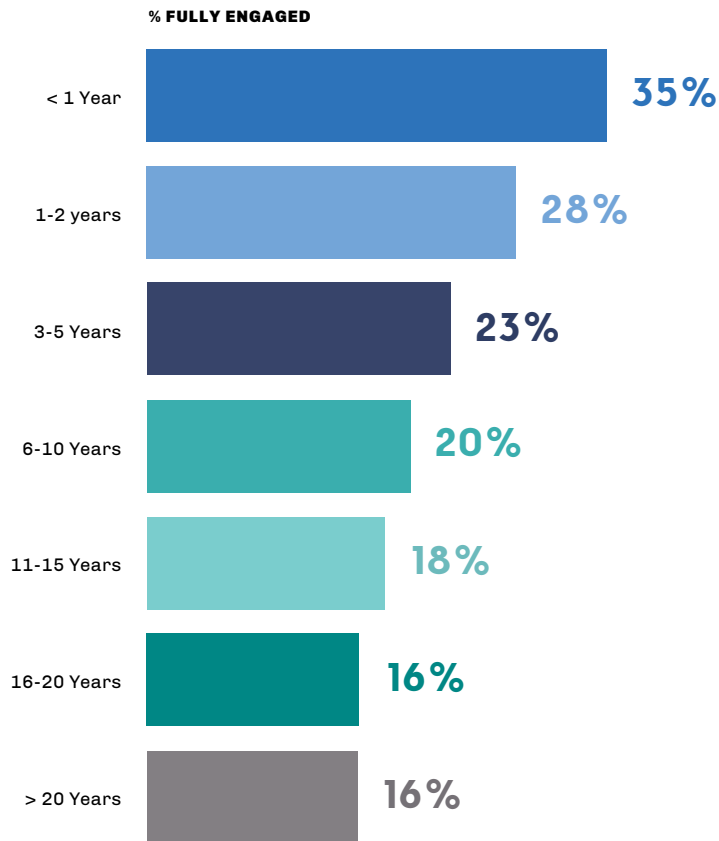
# 5

Efforts to engage the workforce should focus first *not* on the workforce, but on the team leaders of the workforce. Their level of engagement is paramount because it greatly influences engagement downstream.



# 6

All first-year engagement data should be removed from an organization's overall engagement scores.



The high levels of engagement in the first year of service can best be explained by the **“honeymoon effect.”**

These **“Honeymooners”** should be removed to have a more accurate measurement of engagement across the organization.



# 7

Engagement will increase if an organization explicitly offers to its frontline employees many alternative paths to prestige.

The most forward-thinking organizations will be creative in how they use level to satisfy employees' desire for title, prestige, and compensation while not necessarily promoting them into management.

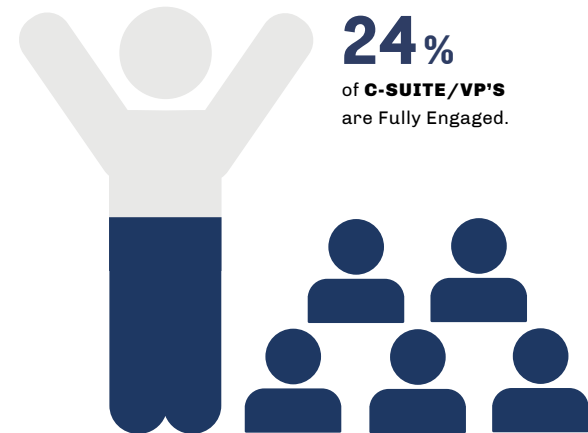
Multiple career tracks and individual contributor 'mastery' tracks **are examples of this.**



**8%**  
of **INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS**  
are Fully Engaged.



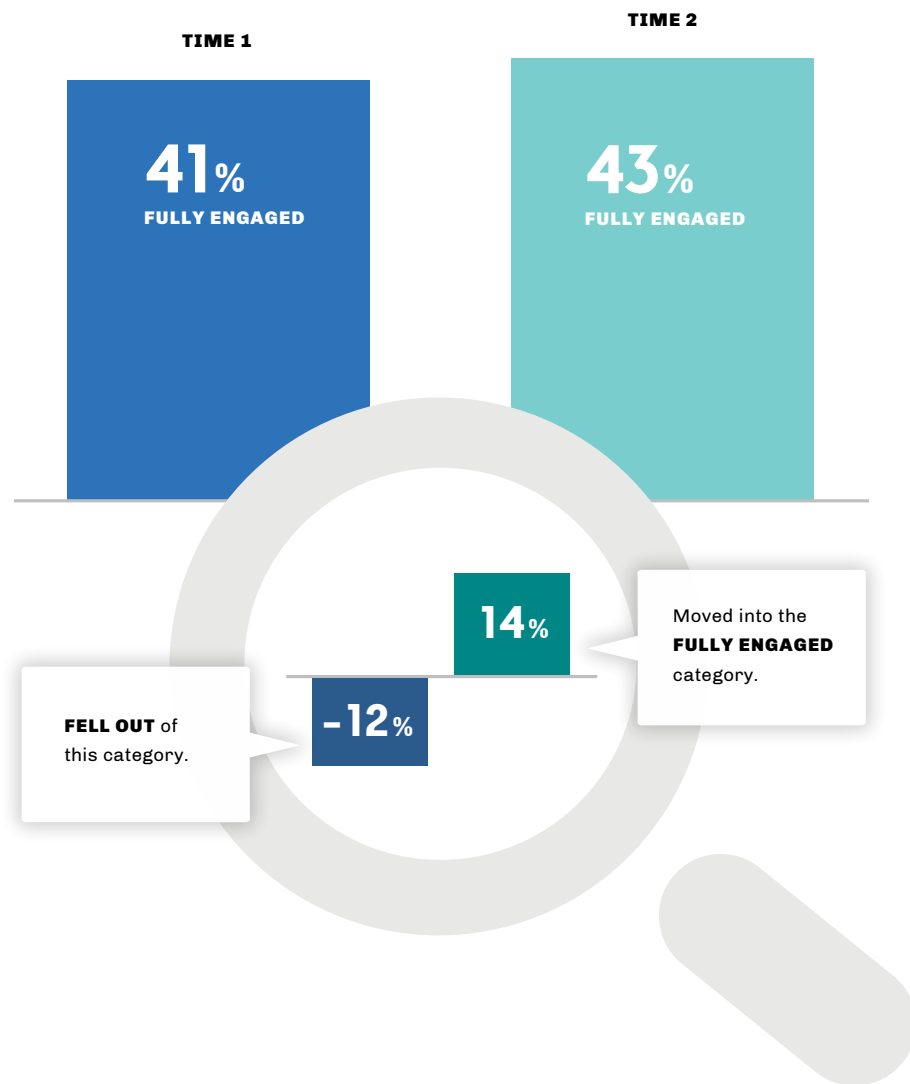
**14%**  
of **MID-LEVEL MANAGERS**  
are Fully Engaged.



**24%**  
of **C-SUITE/VP'S**  
are Fully Engaged.

# 8

Engagement should be reported at the level of the individual to reveal precisely the true nature of movement up or down with an organization. When reported at the aggregated organizational level, similar scores may well hide significant shifts up or down.



Examining changes over time at the individual level will help organizations see the real changes that are occurring.

# 9

Engagement is a state that moves frequently, and this movement precedes changes in performance/retention.



Therefore, if organizations want to increase performance/retention, they will need to measure engagement frequently, while not over-surveying the workforce.

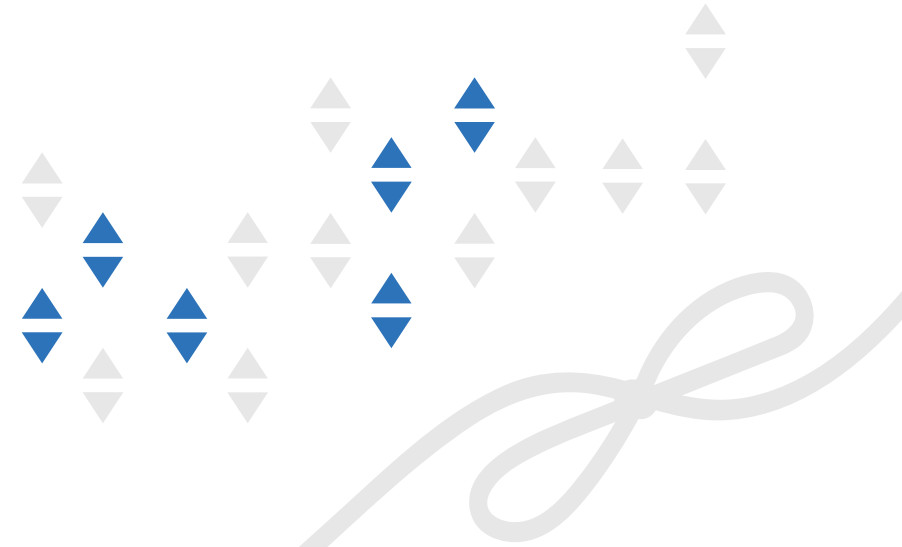
Quarterly **4x** a year.



# 10

Engagement is the responsibility of the team leader. Any effort that honors, enables, and reinforces this responsibility is more likely to succeed in building engagement.

Engagement is not an organizational measure but one that happens at the level of the team.



**Trust** is key to engagement.



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