

AMA RESEARCH

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WORKPLACE ENGAGEMENT

FIXING "THE BROKEN RUNG" REQUIRES
ENGAGEMENT AT EVERY LEVEL

Today's professionals need to be engaged to perform effectively in the workplace. Without feeling heard or supported, or knowing their path for potential advancement, they'll lose interest in their work and eventually move on. True engagement drives both a mental and emotional connection between employees and their employer, which translates into lower absenteeism and higher retention,¹ among other benefits. As employees are the primary driver of business success, keeping them engaged simply makes sense (and cents).

Workplace engagement means employees:

- Fill a role where they showcase their strengths
- Find their work challenging yet interesting
- Feel their opinions are valid and their voice is heard
- Drive customer satisfaction that leads to achieving business outcomes
- Visualize growth opportunities within their current organization
- Earn recognition for their contributions to the team's success
- Have the tools and resources they need to succeed

A globally recognized leader in professional development, American Management Association (AMA) understands the importance of engagement and, as part of its mission, aims to provide timely insights and practical guidance to help managers and their teams.

AMA conducted a nationwide survey on workplace engagement with more than 330 AMA Members and seminar participants. The responses clearly show that men and women do not feel engaged at the same level. Could a lack of engagement and support be holding women back?



¹ Natalie Wickham, "Why is Employee Engagement Important? 14 Benefits Backed by Research," Quantum Workplace, May 7, 2020, <https://www.quantumworkplace.com/future-of-work/14-benefits-of-employee-engagement-backed-by-research>.

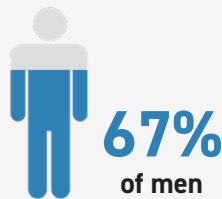
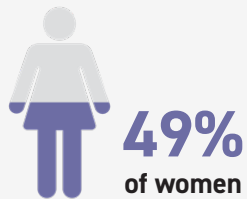
Does Engagement Drive Leadership?

Though they represent more than 54% of the U.S. workforce, women hold just 35% of senior leadership positions.² Women CEOs running Fortune 500 companies are at an all-time high at 44 women. However, that's only 8.8% of the total.³ These numbers beg the question: Is the corporate ladder broken for women?

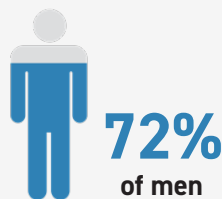
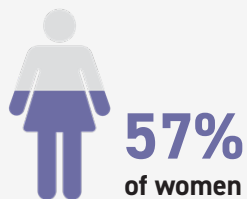
According to the 2022 Women in the Workplace study by McKinsey, the problem exists early on. While 60% of men transition from entry level to first-level management, only 40% of women do the same.⁴ This "broken rung" at the bottom of the corporate ladder creates a ripple effect that leads all the way up to the C-suite, which leaves organizations with fewer and fewer well-trained women leaders to choose from at every stage.

Enhanced workplace engagement could be the key to fixing the broken rung and preparing a clear path for more women in the future.

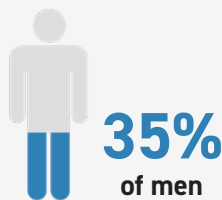
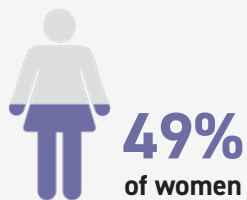
KEY FINDINGS



Agree that their organization provides enough training



Agree that their manager supports their career growth



Are unclear about their career path within their organization



² Sky Ariella, "25 Women in Leadership Statistics [2022]: Facts on the Gender Gap in Corporate and Political Leadership," Zippia, April 19, 2022, <https://www.zippia.com/advice/women-in-leadership-statistics/>.

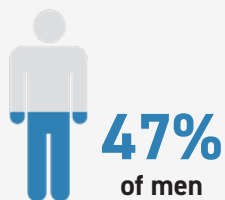
³ Emma Hinchliffe, "Roz Brewer, Thasunda Brown Duckett, Karen Lynch Make up Record Number of Female Fortune 500 CEOs," *Fortune*, May 23, 2022, <https://fortune.com/2022/05/23/female-ceos-fortune-500-2022-women-record-high-karen-lync-sarah-nash/>.

⁴ "Women in the Workplace 2022," McKinsey & Company, October, 18, 2022, <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/women-in-the-workplace>.

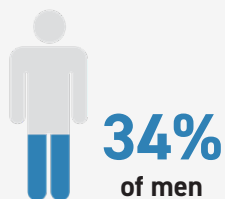
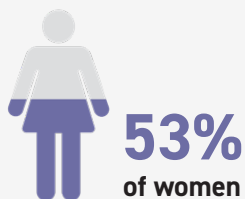


Imagine how the organization might benefit from training each of its entry-level associates consistently, all the while enlisting supportive managers who make growth opportunities clear to the entire team from the start. Training must go beyond the new professional to also reach managers responsible for the support and engagement at every step of the ladder.

Without a multitiered learning and development strategy (one that trains both the employees and the managers training them), an organization opens itself up to unnecessary turnover and related hiring costs, among other challenges. Recent data demonstrates how 37% of employees left their organization due to a lack of career growth, and 27% of employees left because they felt undervalued or underappreciated for their work.⁵ When leaders provide career support and clear career paths, employees feel seen and heard, and they're far more likely to stay with the organization.



Agree that job promotions are administrated fairly



Agree there's favoritism and everyone is not treated equally

⁵ Elise Paulsen, "15 Employee Turnover Statistics to Shape Your Retention Strategy," Quantum Workplace, March 10, 2022, <https://www.quantumworkplace.com/future-of-work/employee-turnover-statistics>.

Women not only feel unsupported by leaders and unsure of their own career path within the organization, they also don't feel that promotions are administered fairly. Some of this could be avoided by including women in the decision-making process throughout the employee life cycle. Specifically, they should be an integral part of recruiting, retaining and professional development conversations. When more women are added to decision-making scenarios, organizations improve processes, increase innovation and achieve greater organizational performance.⁶ If an organization is serious about its commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEI&B), then its culture and hiring/training/promotion practices should clearly link. Leaders must be accountable for that commitment, too.



64%
of women



76%
of men

Agree they can speak up and feel heard about work concerns



52%
of women



37%
of men

Report doing work outside their job description without recognition



44%
of women



33%
of men

Are asked to do more without proper development to do the new job well

Female respondents say it's common to do work outside of the job description but not as common to speak up about it as a concern. When employees engage in organizational cultures where they can speak up, address concerns and suggest new ideas, they have greater organizational commitment and higher job satisfaction. But if they're doing someone else's job—without ample training or recognition—they won't feel valued enough to participate in meaningful and courageous conversations that solve real problems and drive positive change. In fact, more than one-third of these disengaged employees are actively applying to new jobs, compared to only 5% of engaged employees.⁷

⁶ Paulsen, "15 Employee Turnover Statistics."

⁷ Toby Marshall Egan and Zhaoli Song, "Are facilitated mentoring programs beneficial? A randomized experimental field study," *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 72.3 (2008): 351-362.



What Do Both Men and Women Agree On?



They appreciate co-workers the most—compared to other aspects of their job



Pay is the most important thing they'd change about their job

While it's clear many women need improved workplace engagement, almost a third of them (31.7%) must be engaging positively with co-workers if they appreciate them most about the job. Co-workers claimed only 23% of the results for men, but their sense of accomplishment and workplace flexibility both came in at a close second at 20.6% each.

Another 31.7% of women want to change their pay, compared to 22.2% of men. Perhaps the additional work women take on or the favoritism they see in the office influence this metric. Regardless, it's clear there's more work to be done to engage women in the workplace.



Implications of Findings and Conclusions

Managers play a critical role in shaping women's work experiences. Less women are being developed to transition into management and, on top of that, they witness favoritism and don't feel that promotions are fair. Up-and-coming women leaders want more opportunity to advance and a more supportive and inclusive work culture. By investing in training for employees at all levels, including those in leadership roles, organizations can build and sustain engagement while also staying ready for the future.

What is your organization doing to support employee growth, retention and productivity?

AMA is a ready resource to help you to consider the links between employee experience and engagement.

For 100 years, AMA has been helping organizations achieve their strategic objectives through greater execution.

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