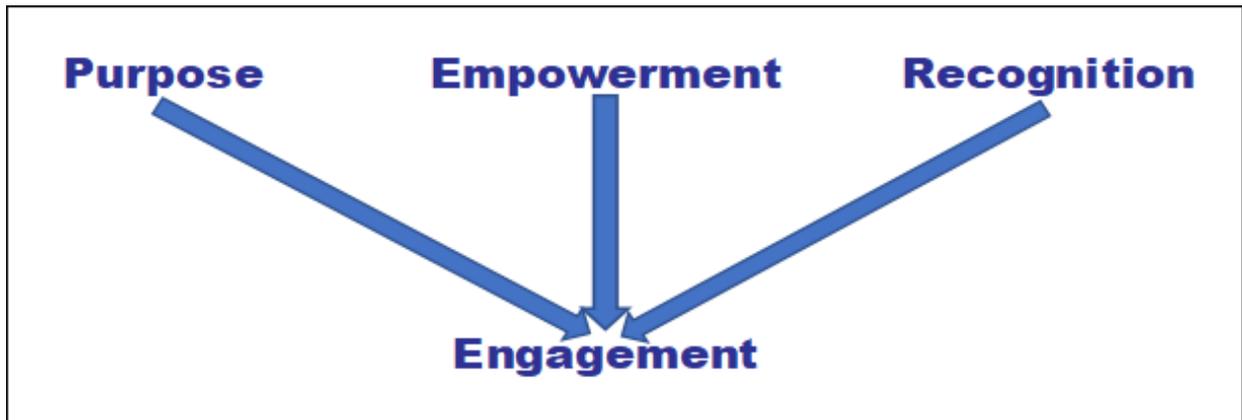


## Elevating Employee Engagement

Employee Engagement is essential for a high performing organization. Unfortunately, it is uncommon in our organizations. A recent news article on the subject celebrated a Gallup survey which found employee engagement rose to 34% in 2019. This celebrated level leaves two thirds of the employee population disengaged in their work. Clearly, employee engagement cannot be left to chance in your organization. Three key drivers for employee engagement are purpose, empowerment, and effective recognition. The following brief explains how to combine these three drivers with a data driven framework and a deep understanding of operations to proactively build engagement in your workforce.



### Purpose

Given their healing mission, health care systems should find it easy to gain employee buy-in to the organization’s purpose. However, engagement will be elevated when the health system is able to demonstrate direct connections between each employee’s role and the organization’s mission. Establishing these direct connections first requires the development of measurable key performance indicators (KPIs) to reflect the level of success the organization attains in achieving its mission. A ground-up approach toward KPI development where KPI’s are established in each of the direct care (line) departments and the accumulated results become the organization’s KPIs is an effective means to keep the organization’s focus on the mission. Next, this focus is reinforced by expecting support departments to develop KPIs which clearly demonstrate their contribution to the direct care departments’ goals. These department KPIs must be actionable and should serve as each department manager’s individual performance factors (IPFs). To develop individual performance factors at the staff level department managers must first establish activity-based job descriptions for each position for which they are responsible. Completing this task will give managers a deep understanding of the work processes needed to generate the required outputs in their departments. Managers will use these activity-based job descriptions to develop measurable individual performance factors, reflecting each individual’s contribution to the achievement of department KPIs and their role in achieving the organization’s mission.

### **Empowerment**

Employee empowerment is driven by the appropriate delegation of authority. Organizations and employees thrive when the employees are trusted to make decisions related to the performance of their duties. A first step in developing this trust is insuring each employee has adopted the organization's behavioral expectations. This objective is achieved by instituting organization wide key operating principles. All employees are expected to apply these key operating principles to their daily work decisions. Next, employees must be given the training and tools needed to insure they can competently carry out their roles. The activity-based job descriptions serve as a guide for developing the required training and tools. Finally, an accountability system must be in place where performance is monitored on a timely basis so that negative variations from expected performance levels can be identified and addressed without delay. Organizations must have a deep understanding of performance drivers and a strong cultural underpinning to deploy this type of employee empowerment. The KPI and IPF system, explained above, establishes the deep understanding of performance drivers and serves as the foundation for the accountability system. Meanwhile, a strong cultural underpinning is achieved through continued emphasis on operating principles that drive reliable employee decision making as well as the consistent demonstration of value-based behaviors from those in leadership.

### **Recognition**

Effective recognition requires rewarding employees for getting the results the organization wishes to achieve. Recognizing activity before getting the results will also contribute to improved employee morale. However, sole reliance on this technique will not achieve the desired level of employee engagement and reinforce their drive to get desired results. The accountability system previously discussed provides the foundation for the results-based recognition system. The quantitative KPI and IPF tools provide the means to recognize high performers in the organization's KPI reports, monthly group meetings, and in individual performance review and mentoring sessions. In addition, by combining the KPI and IPF structure with an employee bonus system the organization has an objective tool for effectively rewarding high performance. Using this tool to recognize high performance and increase employee engagement will accelerate performance improvement throughout the organization.

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