

Engagement

On average, Canadian workers spend about 60% of their waking hours at work. Wouldn't it be nice if your workplace not only made you feel connected but also motivated you to do your best at your job? Do YOU feel motivated when you are at work? Does YOUR work give you a sense of personal accomplishment? What makes YOU feel inspired at work?

Answering these questions can help you look at how engaged you are in your workplace. Feeling engaged at work is about how CONNECTED you feel to your job. Maybe you can RELATE to the overall MISSION of your company. Perhaps you have a STRONG COMMITMENT to seeing your organization succeed. Maybe you find the work you do really makes a DIFFERENCE. Or maybe work is just work, but your workplace makes you feel part of a community.

Let's look at an example. This is Michael. Michael has worked as a middle-school biology teacher for 10 years. If you knew Michael, you would know that he LOVES biology. It is definitely his passion. The class that Michael teaches has many kids living with learning disabilities. He feels like he really makes an impact on his students. Recently, Michael had been asked to teach a semester of math to an advanced class, instead of his biology class. Michael is open to new opportunities... however, after trying it out for two months, he feels less motivated and less connected to his job. The school principal has noticed that Michael isn't quite as engaged.

In Michael's story, it is quite clear that he feels that the topic of biology is very important for his job satisfaction. He also feels like he makes a bigger difference with the students who require more support in the classroom. The reasons why someone feels engaged in their job can differ from person to person. In Michael's example, a different teacher may be more engaged depending on the age group they are teaching, where the school is located, or how much support they get from colleagues.

Engagement can be seen in three ways. Being physically engaged means that you are applying yourself at your job. If you are PHYSICALLY engaged in your job, you may see work as a source of energy. If you are EMOTIONALLY engaged at work, you may find that work brings out your passionate side. You probably have a positive outlook at work as well. If you are COGNITIVELY engaged in your work, you may find that you become absorbed in the type of work you are doing. You may be willing to devote more time or energy than is required, just because you find it interesting.

Knowing yourself, including knowing what is important to you when you are at work... what you value... what interests you... what your talents are... are all important aspects of what makes you, YOU! The more you know, the more you can share with your supervisor and have an open conversation to ensure your job gives you the opportunity to remain engaged. Research shows that engaged employees have high morale at work and develop good relationships with other colleagues, clients, and customers. This ultimately leads to more retention of skilled employees at work.

Speaking with your supervisor can help to ensure your work matches with what matters to you. If Michael's principal recognizes the sign of change in Michael, she could initiate a conversation with him. It is important for the principal or any supervisor to notice when staff are becoming disengaged. This way, action can be taken before someone becomes unhappy and decides to leave.

They can talk about what Michael needs to keep him engaged during this semester and then look at returning to the work that he really CARES about. Relationships also matter. Having a good working relationship with the person you report to, as well as your coworkers, can also affect your engagement at work.

What is one way that you can increase your level of engagement at work over the next month? Could this involve having a conversation with your colleague or supervisor?

Engagement is one of 13 factors that support psychological health and safety in the workplace. Learn more at: [MentalHealthCommission.ca/NationalStandard](https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/NationalStandard)

For more resources for your workplace, check out [haveTHATtalk.ca](https://www.haveTHATtalk.ca)

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