

YOUR GUIDE TO:

THE SCIENCE OF LEARNER ENGAGEMENT



THE SCIENCE OF LEARNER ENGAGEMENT

Engagement (or the lack of it) is one of the most significant organisational challenges of our time.

In fact, it's become harder than ever for organisations and L&D professionals to find the right engagement strategy. After all, they now have to contend with remote teams, digital transformation and smaller budgets. Old approaches are no longer effective.

Luckily, all is not lost! Ultimately, engaged learners make engaged employees. And the best way to engage your learners? Offering innovative training that meets the needs of your workforce.

While this may sound relatively straightforward, there is a lot more to engagement than meets the eye. With that in mind, we crafted this essential engagement guide. It reveals all the secrets you need to know to engage both your learners and employees!

Here at Growth Engineering, our mission is to skyrocket engagement levels by waving goodbye to dull learning strategies and training programmes. We've worked with the best of the best. We've also helped to mastermind 120+ award-winning learning experiences.

This experience is the foundation of this guidebook. Are you ready to turbocharge your engagement levels? Then let's get started!

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WHAT IS ENGAGEMENT?

An engaged employee brings their whole self to work. They bring their physical, mental, cognitive and emotional best to their role every day. And they do so because they are personally and emotionally invested and care about your business and the role they play in it.

You can't fake this kind of engagement. After all, true engagement comes from an alignment between your employee and your business culture, values and mission. It's the perfect match!

But what exactly is the difference between engagement and disengagement and what states of being sit between them? The first section of this guidebook will help you to answer that question before we look at engagement from different perspectives.

Are you ready? Let's get engaged!

What Is Disengagement?

Engagement and disengagement are two sides of the same coin. Engaged employees are optimistic, energised and go above and beyond.

Disengaged employees, on the other hand, tend to be cynical, lack motivation and only do what they have to do. This can have a huge negative impact on their productivity.

Disengaged employees are not emotionally committed to your company. They may have a desire to leave your organisation. In some cases, they may be openly disruptive or undisciplined.

More alarmingly, disengaged individuals can influence their team members' engagement

levels negatively. After all, they are poor at communicating and offer an apathetic approach to tasks and projects.

An Engaged Employee: The Janitor Who Put a Man on the Moon

Let's have a look at an example that highlights the difference between engagement and disengagement.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy was visiting the NASA Space Centre in Huntsville, Alabama. During a tour around the NASA premises, he saw a janitor sweeping a hallway with a broom.

The president stopped the tour to speak to the janitor. He said, 'Hello, I'm Jack Kennedy. What are you doing?'

And the janitor responded, 'Well, Mr President, I'm helping put a man on the moon.'

This illustrates the difference between an engaged employee and a disengaged employee. The engaged individual understands their role in the business's mission. The disengaged employee, on the contrary, has lost sight of the bigger picture. As such, if a disengaged employee was in the janitor's position, they would have responded something along the lines of 'Well, Mr President, I'm sweeping this hallway.'

Sweeping hallways is no doubt a noble and important job. But, if your employees are unable to see beyond the end of their broomstick, they'll miss the rockets launching into space just outside.

Engagement And Purpose

As we can see from the previous example, when it comes to engagement, it is essential that your employees understand the bigger picture. In fact, [research](#) confirms what has long been known: people long to be a part of a cause greater than themselves.

Here at Growth Engineering, we call this [Epic Meaning](#). It's the idea that for people to feel truly fulfilled in their work, it needs to be more than just completing tasks. Instead, work needs to be about helping your organisation hit key milestones en route to achieving its [mission](#).

Does Employee Engagement Matter?

When presented in these terms, engagement can seem rather idealistic.

To many hard-nosed business types, engagement is best left to the kind of organisations that offer their employees

free massages and snacks on a Thursday afternoon. After all, if it isn't about cold hard cash, then what's the point?

Well, you might be surprised to know that engagement is, indeed, about cold hard cash. Businesses are made up of people. And their performance impacts the bottom line of the organisation they work for.

In addition, research shows that engagement has a tremendous impact on employee performance. While we will look at the business impact of engagement more in-depth later on, here are three key statistics to prove the point.

Engagement leads to:

1. [Increased profitability and productivity](#)

Businesses with the highest levels of engagement have a 22% higher rate of profitability than businesses with low levels of engagement.

2. [Outperforming your competition](#)

Organisations with high engagement levels outperform their competition by as much as 202%.

3. [Better retention of staff](#)

69% of disengaged employees would leave a business for a pay rise of just 5%. Only 25% of engaged employees would leave for a pay rise of the same amount.

Is It as Simple as Engagement vs Disengagement?

Engagement is often presented in binary terms. You have engaged employees in one group and disengaged employees in another.

While this can be a helpful way to talk about engagement, it does mask the underlying complexity.

Let's compare it to how people often talk about introverts and extroverts. You can talk in binary terms or recognise that there is a scale with increased extroversion on one end and increased introversion on the other. In between, you can find various grey areas that are murky and confusing.

This emphasises that not everything in life can be neatly labelled, categorised and put into alphabetised boxes. And engagement is one of these complex concepts.

While it can be handy to talk in simplistic terms, you should only use them as a shorthand. It's essential for you to understand that there is a vivid spectrum of engagement levels.

You have profoundly engaged employees at one end and disastrously disengaged employees at the other. And then there is a wide world of engagement between these two extremes.

The Engagement Spectrum

To help make sense of the as-yet unexplored region in between, Growth Engineering have created the Engagement Spectrum.

The spectrum includes six different stages of engagement that are laid out across a continuum.

In the centre, you have a neutral point called pre-engagement (we're nothing if not optimists!). Moving to the left, you go through three stages of increasing disengagement. And working right from the centre, you climb up three stages of increasing engagement.

Let's have a look at these stages in more detail, starting with the stages of disengagement.

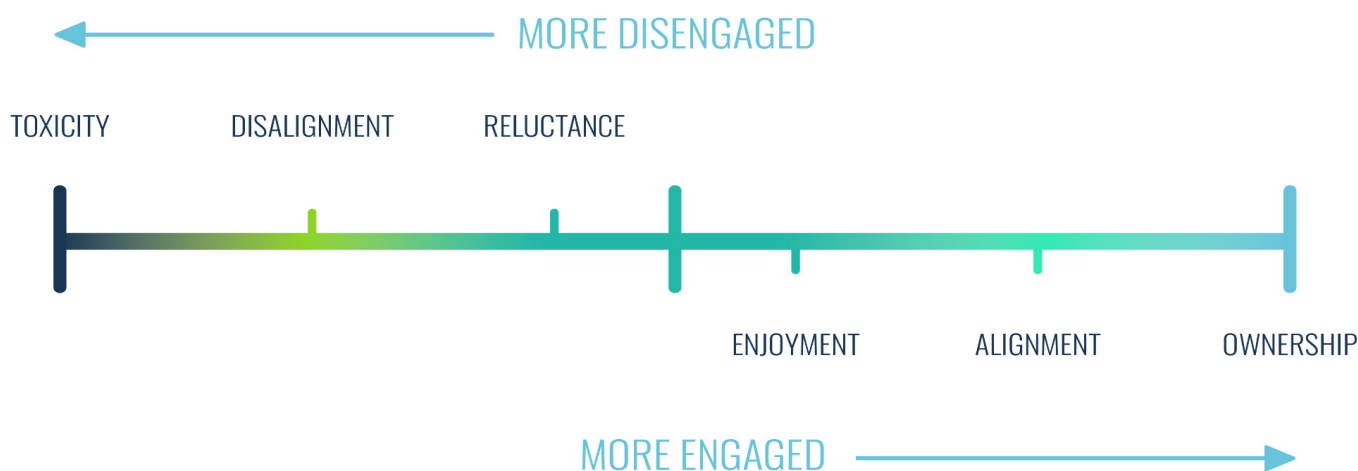
The Stages of Disengagement

Reluctance

If an employee experiences Sunday evening dread (aka the Sunday blues), that's reluctance. Employees in the wrong role often find that work stirs up a sense of dread. This can be because their job is so easy it's mundane. Or it could be the opposite, where your employee feels out of their depth.

At this stage, employees tend to need more support to overcome their engagement issues. As such, if you recognise these issues early, it can be easy to transform your disengaged employee into an engaged one!

After all, no one is naturally disengaged.



They're disengaged because they are in the wrong role, wrong company or need more support from you or the team.

You should keep an eye out for your reluctant employees. It's demoralising to keep doing work that makes you unhappy. It's important to understand this isn't a failure of the employee. After all, everyone needs a job!

Therefore, remember that as an L&D professional or business leader, you can help this employee get pleasure from their role. How? Help them get better at what they do or prepare them for a change.

Disalignment

The next stage of disengagement is called 'disalignment'. It emerges when your employee is a poor cultural fit for your organisation.

If your employees do not enjoy their job or they don't get on with their team, work can feel like it has nothing to offer except a paycheque. Whilst everyone needs money, people also want to feel like they belong.

Any employee whose values are out of kilter with the business and who hasn't bought into your mission will often feel out of place from day one. And employees who experience disalignment might grumble and moan. They might also resent extra work and lack the motivation to perform effectively. This often means that they leave small jobs waiting at the bottom of their to-do list. Likewise, big jobs may take longer to complete than they should. As a result, you can see your overall organisational productivity suffer.

Toxicity

When an employee doesn't like their job or mesh with the business, their disengagement can ferment and boil over into full-blown toxicity.

If an employee has reached this stage, it's likely because their frustrations have been left unaddressed for some time. And, you guessed it, businesses should always address employee disengagement issues before they reach toxicity.

Toxic employees can have a serious negative influence on your business. They tend to work slowly, lack initiative, complain regularly and find themselves at odds with the organisation.

But don't fret! Even toxic-stage employees can be saved. To do so, you need to have an honest and open conversation.

Try and find the source of the problem. Then, see if you can put a plan in place to help them rekindle their love for your organisation.

The Stages of Engagement

Enjoyment

The first stage of engagement is called 'enjoyment'. At this stage, employees enjoy the mechanics of their day job.

Their responsibilities and workload mirror their talents and capabilities. This makes their work satisfying. As the saying goes, 'do what you love, and you'll never work a day in your life.'

Employees at this stage will be a positive influence within your company, albeit a gentle one. As they enjoy their work, you might find them going above and beyond to do it well.

Alignment

Many people think that the best they can ask for is to enjoy their work. But that's not true! They can ask for so much more.

When an employee loves the culture of your business, they don't just enjoy the work. Instead, they appreciate every aspect of your company, from its mission to its people and through to its workspace. The relationships they build help them perform better and enjoy their job more.

In the same way, employees aligned with the values and mission of your business will find that their enjoyment morphs into a whole new thing: fulfilment.

You can expect employees at this stage to be innovative within their roles. They tend to seek out opportunities to creatively drive the business onward towards the next key milestone.

Ownership

When an employee is the most engaged they can be, it's a perfect marriage between your organisation and the individual. You share the same values. As a result, they slot neatly into the culture of your organisation, and your mission becomes their mission.

So what's the difference between 'ownership' and 'alignment'? An employee who is aligned with your business loves to work there. An employee at the ownership stage, on the other hand, loves the business itself.

They see their employer as a force for good in the world. And as a result, they try to be a force for good in the workplace.

They'll make the workplace a nicer place to be. They'll do everything in their power to make the culture more inviting and positive. They're also the employees who will have the boldest ideas and highlight key ways for improvement.

Finally, a truly engaged employee will have infectious excitement and irrepressible

energy. As a result, they'll make others feel more engaged!

Why Is The Model Arranged Like This?

The different stages of the Engagement Spectrum are like checkpoints in a race. If you want to reach the ultimate goal, there is a certain route you have to take.

For example, an employee is unlikely to be engaged with their work if they are aligned with your business goals but find their job tedious. Likewise, if an employee is apathetic to your business's mission but loves what they do, it's unlikely that they will become a toxic employee.

In Conclusion

Engagement is a complex idea. But, at its core, it's the degree to which an employee is aligned with your business's mission and the extent to which they give their energy to play their part.

Engagement comes with vast benefits for both the individual and your organisation. As such, employee engagement is the goal of every HR professional and business leader.

But how does engagement differ from learner engagement? The next section of this guide will dive into the differences between these terms.



EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT VS LEARNER ENGAGEMENT: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Everyone's trying to engage someone these days. Whether it's young lovers proffering a ring, organisations trying to capture a market or public speakers grabbing their audience's attention.

There are lots of different types of engagement. Thankfully, most people only have to contend with one type of engagement at any one time. But it's not so easy for HR and L&D professionals.

In fact, learning professionals have to deal with learner engagement *and* employee engagement. These types of engagement are frustratingly similar but still different enough to warrant a clear distinction. As if life wasn't confusing enough!

From the outside looking in, the difference might seem unimportant. So why worry?

In this section of the guidebook, we're going to unmuddle things for you. We'll start by breaking down each type of engagement and exploring their history.

We'll end by looking at how they overlap and how you, as a learning professional, can forge a path towards both learner engagement and employee engagement.

Learner Engagement

Learner engagement is important for L&D professionals. It refers to how much attention and focus your audience is giving your learning content.

It's an idea borrowed from the world of marketing. Marketers think about engagement in terms of attention. After all, they are very literally a great big bunch of attention seekers.

Ever since the rise of social media, 'engagement' has become a common term. People now use it to describe how much attention they have managed to capture from their audience. Things like retweets, likes and comments are seen as an 'engagement' with a person or brand.

Similarly, learner engagement is a specific type of audience engagement. In this case, your audience is your learners, and their engagement is how much of their attention your online learning has managed to capture.

The History of Learner Engagement

The graphic at the bottom of this page (courtesy of [Google Ngram Viewer](#)) shows us the popularity of the term 'learner engagement' over time.

You can see 'learner engagement' in green and 'learning management system' in turquoise. These two terms have followed a similar path, with 'learner engagement' tracking a few years behind 'learning management system'.

It's no coincidence that the rise of [learning management systems](#) (LMS) preceded the need for learner engagement. There are two key reasons for this:

Online learning platforms made it easy for L&D professionals to measure and track how much learners were engaging with their content. Reporting suites meant they could determine content completion rates, logins, dropout rates, and more for the very first time.

Secondly, learning management systems were notoriously boring for the first few decades of their existence. Learners would

log into their online learning platform, their eyes would glaze over, and they'd never come back. It's little wonder the goal of engaging learners soon gained traction.

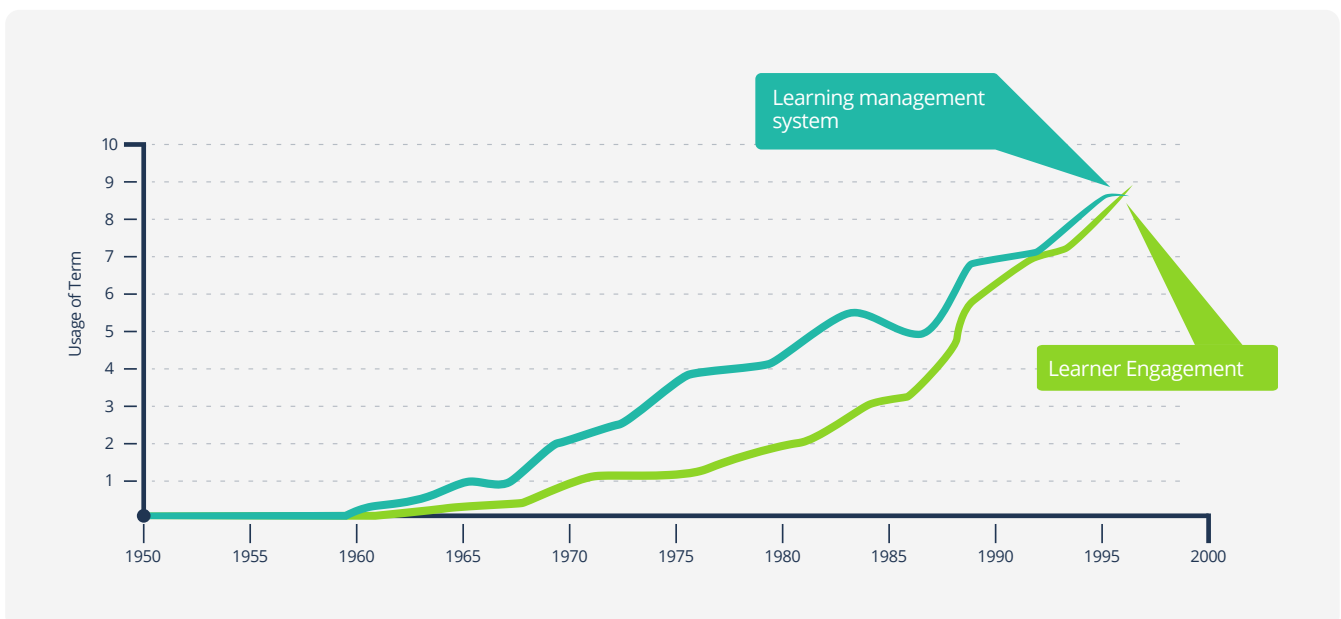
Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is less to do with capturing the attention of your employees and more to do with capturing their hearts and minds as a whole.

In a nutshell, employee engagement is about inspiring your people to care about what they're doing.

This can be on a small scale so that [employees are engaged](#) with a specific task. Or it can be on a bigger scale so that your employees are engaged with their job as a whole. And it doesn't stop there. You can talk about the engagement of individuals, teams or even whole companies.

As we explored in the first section of this guidebook, when an employee is engaged, they bring the whole of themselves to their work. And this means that you get the very best of their physical, mental, cognitive and emotional abilities.



The History of Employee Engagement

The graphic at the bottom of this page shows the popularity of the terms 'learner engagement' and 'employee engagement' over fifty years. Whilst they have peaked and troughed since the 1960s, they've both seen a surge in significance since the 1990s.

Employee engagement has been rigorously studied since the 1970s. It's a massive and important topic within the business world. There are over 2.3 million results for the topic on Google Scholar. That's a lot of research.

'From People to Profits, the HR link to the service-profit chain' [was published](#) in 1990. It brought employee engagement into focus in boardrooms across the globe because it demonstrated a direct link between engaged employees, satisfied customers and increased revenue.

This research was then followed up by plenty more. But the defining moment for employee engagement was [Gallup's 2013 employee engagement survey](#). Its findings stunned business leaders: only 13% of employees across America were engaged.

Suddenly, engagement was an urgent priority. And it remains that way to this day.

How Do They Overlap?

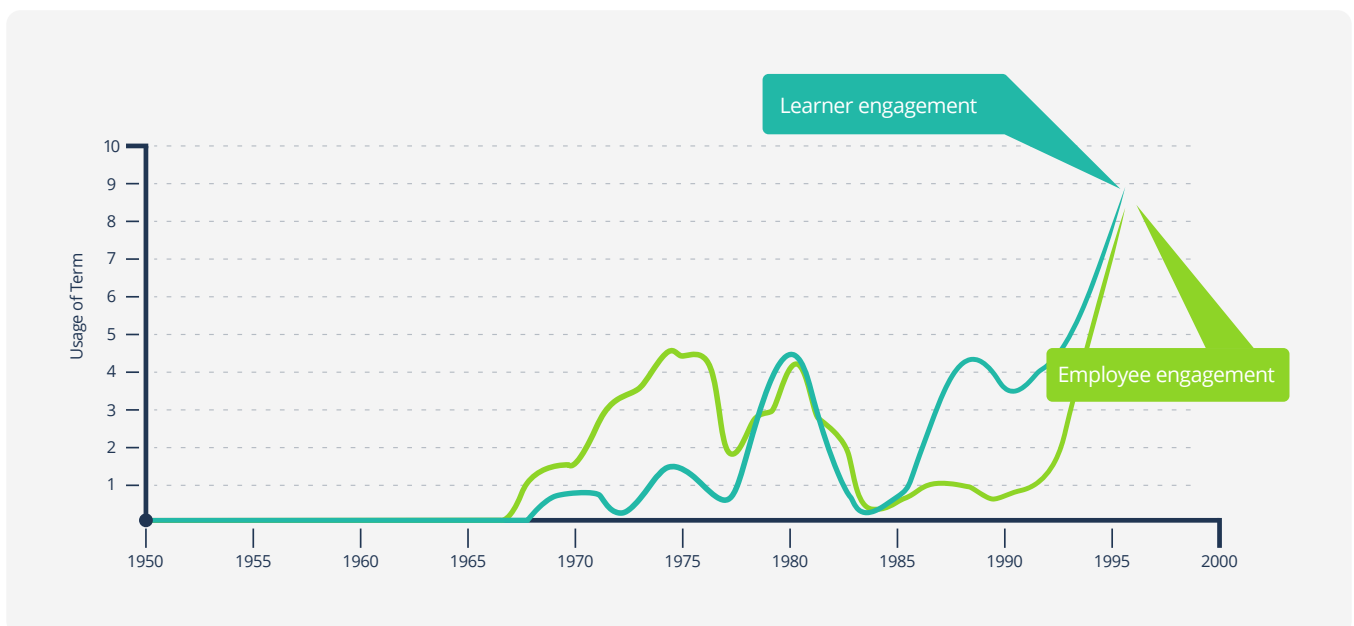
The two types of engagement are clearly quite different in their focus. But in what ways do they overlap?

This is important to understand. Especially as those who are invested in one of the two are likely to have a vested interest in the other as well.

And given that's the case, we have some good news! Many of the strategies proven to increase learner engagement will also increase employee engagement and vice versa.

The Venn diagram on the next page demonstrates the differences and similarities between the two engagement types.

On the left are the elements of learner engagement that don't directly impact employee engagement. And on the right are the elements of employee engagement that don't directly impact learner engagement.



But in the centre of the diagram, you'll see various factors that contribute to both learner engagement and employee engagement.

This raises the question, is there a clear relationship between learner engagement and employee engagement?

The Link Between Employee Engagement and Learner Engagement

Engaged employees are much easier to motivate to complete training. If an employee cares about your business and your mission, and if they understand the role they play, it will be much easier for them to see the value your training offers them.

It's also true that employees who lack job security or who feel underappreciated will be much less engaged with their job. In turn, they will be reluctant workplace learners.

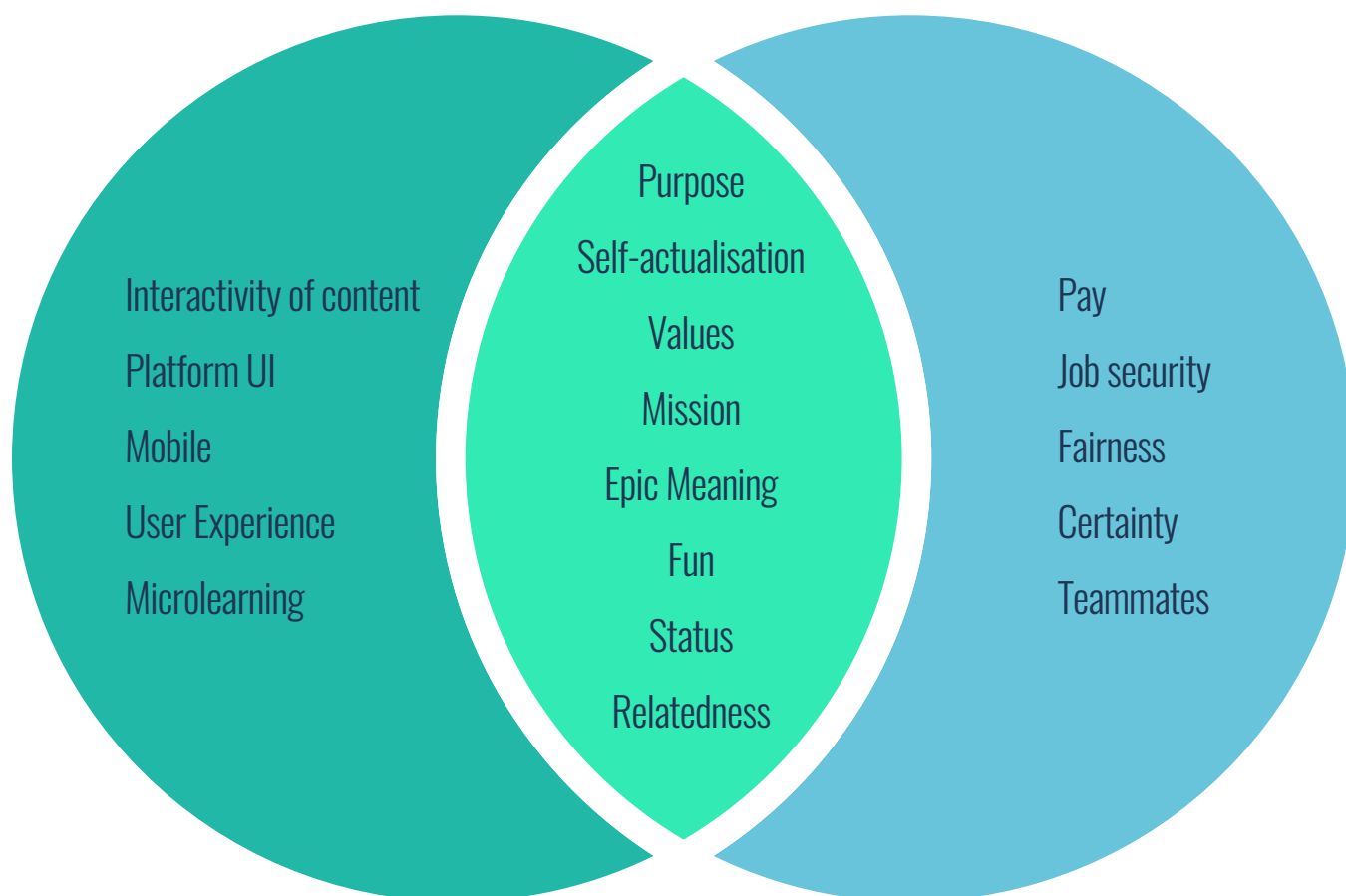
Furthermore, team members who are engaged with their learning will become more engaged as employees. After all, learning can be fun, it can spark curiosity and it also releases feel-good chemicals in the brain.

This drives further engagement throughout your learners and helps them to extract more enjoyment from their job.

But even more importantly, learning and development drive a greater sense of self-actualisation. This means that as your employees learn, they have a sense of growth and a sense of becoming who they want to be.

You can also use your learning content to generate Epic Meaning.

This means they will have a better understanding of your organisation's purpose and the role they play in it.



Three Ways Training Drives Employee Engagement

1. Training Helps You Shape Your Organisation's Culture

The training you choose to deliver has a knock-on impact on your organisation as a whole. It's the perfect way to let your learners understand what behaviours will help them fit into your business.

Ultimately, this will help them feel like they belong to your organisation's community. This is essential to engagement.

2. Training Shows You Care

[60%](#) of millennials say that learning and growing at work is essential. This means that employers need to invest in staff training to help them grow.

This is particularly important in a world where the average employee is [increasingly sceptical](#) about business motives.

You now need to prove you care, not just say that you do. Training is one of the very best ways you can do that, as you're investing in people as individuals. It's a win-win situation!

3. People Like Being Good at What They Do

[Self-Determination Theory](#) helps us to understand the nature of motivation and engagement. This model emphasises the importance of competence in driving certain behaviours throughout a group of people.

Indeed, the theory suggests that when individuals have a sense of proficiency or mastery, their intrinsic motivation increases. This leads to greater engagement and active participation in the task at hand.

Three Reasons Engaged Employees Make Engaged Learners

1. Employees Work Harder When They Feel Valued

Feeling valued is an important part of employee engagement. It's no surprise that engaged employees [work harder](#).

Indeed, the more engaged your employees are, the more likely they are to consider workplace training a key part of their role.

This means that your employees would take their online learning more seriously if they felt more valued.

2. Engaged Employees Will Be Learning Ambassadors

Employees who are engaged are generally much more invested in organisational activities.

In contrast, disengaged employees typically require a lot more persuasion to participate.

You'll even find your engaged employees proactively encouraging their colleagues to complete training. They're like your very own organisational influencers!

3. Engaged Employees Go The Extra Mile

As we have explored, ordinary employees typically do what is required or expected of them, whereas engaged employees are characterised by their enthusiasm and energy.

This means an unengaged employee will do required training, whilst an engaged employee might proactively seek out opportunities to grow and improve.

In Conclusion

Learner engagement and employee engagement are incredibly similar. But there are key differences between them that are essential for all L&D and HR professionals to understand.

Once you've understood the differences, the overlap becomes clear. Then you can use your knowledge of their similarities to help achieve all your engagement goals.

Neither learner nor employee engagement exists in a vacuum. Improve one, and there is a very good chance you'll improve the other!



THE SCARF MODEL OF ENGAGEMENT

Now we know that employee engagement is paramount to business success, just as learner engagement is to training programme success. But this presents us with two baffling problems.

First, you cannot demand engagement from your employees or learners. If only you could! Then you could add it to job descriptions and raise it in annual reviews.

But you can't. In fact, any attempt to force engagement will often have the opposite effect and instead breed resentment. No, your employees have to give it to you of their own volition.

And second, engagement is wreathed in mystery. Why one employee is disengaged whilst another seemingly near-identical employee is engaged can be incredibly hard to pin down. It's like being trapped in an escape room without clues.

Luckily, David Rock and the SCARF Model can help. The SCARF Model is a five-component framework that helps explain human behaviour as driven by social concerns.

As such, in this section, we'll cover the SCARF Model in detail before showcasing how you can use it to create a highly engaged and productive workforce.

Dr David Rock

[Dr Rock](#) is a neuroscientist with an awesome name and an even better model of engagement. He helps people and businesses apply neuroscientific research to the workplace.

To this end, he co-founded the Neuroleadership Institute and lectures at universities like Oxford.

Dr Rock developed the SCARF Model back in 2008. It provides insights from the world of neuroscience to help you understand the conditions needed to engage employees.

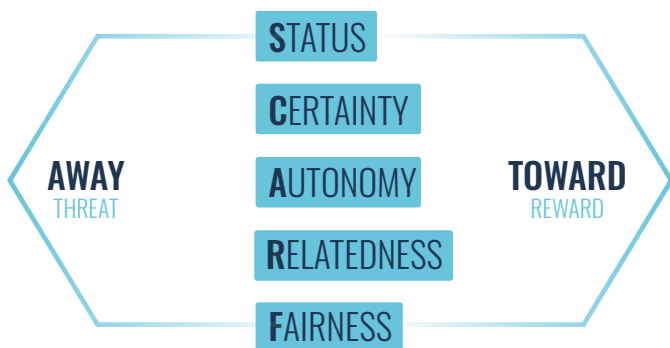
As such, it will help you unwrap the mystery surrounding engagement. As a result, you can discern what's actually needed to engage your workforce. This, in turn, helps you to impact your business positively.

What Is the SCARF Model?

As explored, the SCARF Model has five components that help to explain human behaviour as driven by social concerns. But what does this actually mean?

The model utilises two key themes emerging from the vast and diverse field of social neuroscience.

Human motivation is largely driven by our desire to **maximise rewards** and **minimise threats**.



The brain considers our social needs to be as important as our basic needs for food and water.

The model identifies five social drivers of human behaviour. The first initial of each category makes up the S, C, A, R and F of the SCARF model.

- **Status:** How you see yourself and how others see you.
- **Certainty:** How confident you can be of the future.
- **Autonomy:** How much control you have over your life.
- **Relatedness:** How connected you feel to others.
- **Fairness:** How reasonable you feel decisions involving you have been.

The SCARF Model allows us to classify and understand the social triggers that drive our behaviour. In the workplace, this model enables us to design the right interactions that maximise rewards and minimise threats for employees and teams.

The Foundational Thread of the SCARF Model

There is a driving principle behind the SCARF model that knits the whole framework together.

It's the **idea** that the human brain has been organised to **minimise threats and maximise rewards**.

Threat: Threat is a shorthand way of describing things that make you feel a wide range of negative emotions. It includes everything from fear and sadness to anxiety and depression.

Reward: Reward is the flipside of a threat. It is a shorthand way of describing things that make you feel good emotions like happiness, creativity, curiosity, hope and love.

Put even simpler, threats are the things you want to run away from, and rewards are the things you want to run towards.

This idea is intuitive and easy to understand, but the ramifications are huge. It means that throughout your life, you will have consistently made decisions that minimise any danger to you and maximise any good.

Threat State vs Reward State

Millions of years of evolution have trained our brains to behave very differently when responding to a threat compared to responding to a reward.

Imagine, for a moment, that you are an early human living on a desert plain 200,000

years ago. Your brain would respond very differently to the threat of being chased by a tiger, compared with the potential reward of obtaining fruit that is located high up in a tree.

In the first situation, all you need to do is run or climb. In the second, you may need some creativity and intelligent thinking.

Accordingly, here are some of the biggest differences between the threat state and the reward state:

Responding to threats:

- Blood is redirected from the brain to the muscles
- Less creativity
- Fewer insights
- Fewer ideas for new things to do
- Focus on the here and now

Responding to rewards:

- Increased blood flow to the brain
- More creativity
- Problem-solving and insights
- Fresh ideas for things to do
- An ability to focus on bigger things

Employee Engagement and the SCARF Model

1. Neutral Engagement

When tackling engagement, the five dimensions of the SCARF Model are typically arranged into axes with a sliding scale.



Neutral engagement means a state where your axes sit in the middle. As such, at a neutral engagement state, the model would look like it does above.

2. Disengagement

Imagine if each person had their own SCARF slider to represent how they felt. Each of the letters represents a different type of threat or reward. If all the sliders were on the left-hand side, the person would be in the threat state.

That would make for an anxious, sluggish and possibly even depressed person. And your slider would look something like this:



3. Engagement

But if you move all the sliders to the right, towards the reward state, these individuals are more energised, happy, curious and creative. As a result, your model would look like this:



How Does the SCARF Model Relate to Engagement?

As we know, engagement can feel like one of those fussy plants that won't grow unless the soil PH, sunlight and water levels are

just right. But when you find the right care routine, you will soon see it grow into a strong and healthy plant.

This growth can be interrupted if you stop watering your plant, water it too much or repot it at the wrong time.

In engagement terms, this means that all it takes for an engaged employee to become disengaged is for one of the sliders to drop back towards the left-hand side.

For instance, imagine if your engaged employee finds out that their team is at risk of redundancies. Suddenly their sense of certainty about the future would drop like this:



But imagine if they find out that their job is one of three at risk of redundancy. This would result in their sense of certainty falling through the floor. Suddenly, your model looks like this:



You can understand that an employee whose sense of certainty is out of kilter will no longer be engaged. After all, their mind will be on other things, and they'll be worrying about what's in store for them.

And even if they find out that their job remains safe, it can still take time for them to

inch their way back to engagement.

The same dynamic applies to all aspects of the SCARF model. If you don't connect with your colleagues or you feel like you were passed over for a promotion unfairly, this will impact your engagement.

The same is true if you feel like people don't respect you or if you have no autonomy in your role. Any one of these factors can be a barrier between your employees and engagement.

Keeping All Areas of SCARF Positive

If the five SCARF elements are the foundation for engagement, then that means you need your employees' SCARF sliders to be as right-leaning as possible. But how do you do that?

The frustrating truth is that there is no silver bullet solution. Life is beyond the control of even the most carefully managed corporate processes. Nobody knows what the future has in store, and nobody has complete control over their own life or over other people's lives.

And this, of course, means that you can't expect your employees to be engaged 100% of the time. That's just not how life works. Luckily, the SCARF model can offer us some encouragement.

It tells us that employees simply want to be respected and treated fairly. They want to have a degree of certainty about the future and to have good relationships with their colleagues.

If you offer this, you can be confident that you're doing everything you can to build a strong foundation for employee engagement.

But once you have that foundation in place, what can you do to keep nudging the sliders

further to the right? How can you go that one step further and actively engage your employees?

Who knew how much power these five letters held in driving human behaviour? Well, now you do, and it's time to make them work for your organisation!

Let's see how one letter at a time:

1. Status

Status is linked to our relative importance in relation to others. The increase or decrease of status triggers the reward and threat circuits of our brain. As our status goes up, we are [rewarded with dopamine](#), a happy hormone that elevates our mood.

On the other hand, a decrease in status can create anxiety. This is associated with an increase in cortisol levels.

This, in turn, explains how an employee's sense of status in the workplace can also influence their general [wellbeing](#).

Maximise Rewards By:

Improving your employee's performance through learning and development initiatives is a great way to raise their status. As such, a good training programme that caters to the different [learning needs](#) of your employees is a worthwhile investment.

With today's hybrid and global workforce, the [right learning solution](#) is one where you can engage and unite teams in different locations and cultures. Moreover, giving your employees a chance to broadcast their learning achievements with others can also boost their status.

This is where [online learning technology](#) can help.

By providing your employees with the right learning platform and tools, you encourage them to learn proactively and showcase their progress with others.

You can also make your employees feel good by providing positive feedback for their efforts. Recognition and a sense of progress activate the reward circuits of your employees' brains, encouraging them to work even harder to maintain or increase their status.

In addition, organising [social Clubs](#) or groups where your employees can practise [social learning](#) is another way to boost their status. After all, this gives them an opportunity to demonstrate their mastery of a topic.

Minimise Threats By:

Proceed with caution when giving advice or instructions to employees. This helps to prevent them from feeling ineffective at their tasks.

Performance reviews are a minefield, where the threat states of employees can easily be triggered. As such, the key is to make sure your employees know that you're their ally and not a foe out to diminish their achievements or crush their ego.

Letting your employees evaluate their job performance is another great way to break down any defence barriers. By doing so, [employees feel less threatened](#) and more open to suggestions for improvement.

2. Certainty

As rational beings, we naturally attempt to predict the future so that we can plan our next move. This is because our brains are hard-wired to [crave certainty](#), being the pattern-recognition machines they are.

But constantly trying to figure things out can get pretty exhausting. This is why we are creatures of [habit and routine](#). We need to conserve a good amount of our brain's energy to deal with far more important things.

When unexpected events occur, they trigger a fight-or-flight response in our brains. This, in turn, can skyrocket our stress levels. As a result, this can cloud our capacity for [rational decision-making](#) and affect our performance overall.

Maximise Rewards By:

Increase certainty by establishing [clear expectations and guidelines](#) for your employees. You can do so by making sure that objectives and roles are clear from the get-go.

Communicating a definite agenda and time duration for meetings also helps to increase clarity across your teams. This should allow your staff to prepare and plan more confidently, based on the information they receive.

When implementing a new initiative, assure your employees and stakeholders of the intended impact and how it will affect the concerned parties. You can also increase certainty by clearly communicating the timelines of your [new initiatives](#).

Minimise Threats By:

Big change brings [big uncertainty](#). This is especially apparent during organisational restructures, which can increase anxiety for employees. As such, you should attempt to minimise threats by being transparent and sharing information with your team.

Moreover, your managers may benefit from scenario planning, a strategic exercise to

manage future events. Break down complex projects into manageable chunks and create clear timelines and tasks.

3. Autonomy

Autonomy relates to our ability to influence outcomes or act according to our own values and interests. The degree of control we have over our environment strongly links to our [brain's threat and reward centres](#).

When employees feel a loss of control, they become stressed. This, in turn, reduces their capacity to act efficiently.

As such, helping each member of your team to improve their sense of autonomy can increase their wellbeing. On the other hand, employees who are micromanaged can feel a [reduction in autonomy](#). This is likely to provoke a threat response.

Maximise Rewards By:

Providing employees with room to tailor their [learning and development programme](#) is a good way to increase their agency.

You can do this by providing them with a modern learning platform that allows them to set their own learning objectives and explore courses at their own pace.

And did you know that even the little freedoms you provide your employees can go a long way? As such, the freedom to organise one's workspace, set one's working hours, and determine one's own performance goals (within established policy) can help increase autonomy.

Minimise Threats By:

While the [formation of teams](#) can improve innovation and productivity, conflicts can arise if those teams are not properly managed.

Minimise stress by ensuring that each employee has their own tasks with ownership and accountability.

You should also ensure that employees are [actively engaged and involved](#) in setting, shaping and monitoring overall team objectives. This will result in objectives that are meaningful to them on a personal level.

By giving each employee the freedom to contribute and shape project outcomes, you can protect their autonomy while reaping the full benefits of a happy and collaborative team.

4. Relatedness

Relatedness refers to how connected or safe we feel with others. It also concerns our sense of belonging and affinity in a particular group.

This is a key driver in many types of teams. When we form bonds with people, our brain's reward centre lights up. These bonds produce oxytocin, which encourages collaboration and trust.

On the other hand, strangers or intimidating people may be perceived as threats. This is typically due to the lack of information or affinity we have with them.

As a result, our defensive walls go up, which can block feelings of empathy.

Our social bond with others is a primary need that contributes to our wellbeing and ability to function optimally.

As such, it is essential that employees feel connected with their colleagues and the company at large if they are expected to perform at their best.

Maximise Rewards By:

Increase relatedness by promoting safe connections between employees and among teams. You can do this by encouraging positive interactions through team-building activities.

Explore channels that can increase interaction and engagement, such as [gamification](#) and [social learning](#). This sets up a [knowledge-sharing culture](#) where teams can learn from each other and work together on common quests or goals.

Similarly, organising clubs or groups where your employees can join and network is a good way to encourage social connections. This allows them to discover common interests with their colleagues, promoting trust and closer bonds.

Providing a proper onboarding programme for new employees can also increase their sense of belonging to your organisation.

An effective onboarding strategy is one where employees can get to know different teams and familiarise themselves with your organisational [culture](#) straight away.

Minimise Threats By:

With the evolving demands of the modern-day workplace, [remote working](#) has emerged as one of the key [challenges facing managers today](#).

When [face-to-face contact](#) cannot be used to promote strong social bonds, team-building strategies can help to keep remote teams together.

Adding cultural diversity to your teams is an essential pillar of business success. But in the wrong environment, it can be a hotbed for misunderstandings and biases in your global (or virtual) workplace.

To minimise threats, you should [encourage interactions](#) where your teams can share their interests. Do not hesitate to organise non-work meetings where team members can simply hang out and get to know each other.

Furthermore, you can increase cultural awareness and collaboration amongst teams by organising induction seminars that address diversity.

5. Fairness

Fair exchanges are intrinsically rewarding. This explains the attraction of voluntary duty. After all, volunteering increases people's sense of fairness in the world.

Unfair exchanges, on the other hand, generate a strong threat response. In fact, our [amygdala](#) activates when we face a sense of injustice.

The amygdala is the [area of the brain](#) that is associated with dealing with intense emotions like disgust. As a result, our capacity for empathy is often disabled when we perceive someone or something as being unfair.

Maximise Rewards By:

Meeting expectations or following up on the promises you've made to your employees increases their sense of fairness. Similarly, you should seek to provide compensation that matches their capabilities and competency.

Don't hesitate to acknowledge and [reward](#) employees for meeting certain goals or targets. This helps them to feel validated for their efforts, increasing your employees' sense of fairness.

In addition, practising diversity and inclusion within today's workplace is a must. After all, all employees deserve to be treated fairly as individuals.

Minimise Threats By:

Establish clear ground rules and desired values you want your team to follow. By doing so, your team members understand what is expected of them and have clear guidance on correct conduct.

Similarly, this gives them a clearer sense of how to treat their colleagues. By creating and promoting a shared culture built on common values and rules, you can help bring teams closer together.

There you have it! The S-C-A-R-F secrets of top managers for employee productivity! But hold on, we have one final tip that will really turbocharge your engagement strategy.

Epic Meaning

As we have explored, Epic Meaning is all about being a part of something bigger than yourself. It's about having lofty goals to make the world a better place. As such, let's look at how Epic Meaning can impact the SCARF model, one thread at a time:

- **Status:** Nothing is better for your perception of yourself or for other people's perception of you, than doing something meaningful.
- **Certainty:** By solving problems you make the world a more certain place. This helps to remove some of the risks that make life scary.
- **Autonomy:** Making the world a better place is the ultimate expression of autonomy. You are making choices, and the choices you make are solving problems.
- **Relatedness:** One person alone cannot make meaningful change. Teams who are working together to achieve the same goals are more tight-knit than any other.

- **Fairness:** Making the world a better place means making it a fairer place at the same time.

This may sound like high-mindedness, but the figures back us up. Studies consistently demonstrate that businesses with a vision or a [mission](#) for a better world achieve more than businesses that simply exist to make money and beat the competition.

In Conclusion

The SCARF Model helps you to see engagement for what it really is. You can see past the confusion and perceive the true fabric of engagement. And it's very, very simple.

After all, who doesn't want to be respected and treated fairly, to have a degree of certainty about the future and to have good relationships with colleagues?

We all want to have an impact on the world. We want to leave it a better place than we found it. This purpose grants us a sense of Epic Meaning. And there's few things more engaging than that.



THE NEUROSCIENCE OF ENGAGEMENT

Learner engagement is considered to be the holy grail of any successful learning initiative. Yet, many [organisations still struggle](#) to engage their learners or employees.

This is why L&D professionals continue to rank [learner engagement](#) as one of their top focuses when it comes to workplace learning.

To make this process easier, we will explore the neuroscience of engagement. But before then, let's start by identifying the five levels of learner engagement!

The Five Levels of Learner Engagement

Here at [Growth Engineering](#), we define deep learner engagement as a desired state with five key characteristics. These characteristics are:

Level 1 – Engaged learners are mentally present:

They are attentive and focused. Moreover, they are challenged by your learning material. This encourages even more active learning and participation.

Level 2 – Engaged learners are emotionally connected:

This is characterised by low stress levels and a positive mood state. What's more, engaged learners also derive purpose from your training programme.

Level 3 – Engaged learners are proactive and curious:

This is highlighted by a heightened combination of mental and emotional engagement.

At this stage, learners are proactively progressing through [various levels](#) of their learning material. This is driven by their innate curiosity to explore and uncover fresh information.

Level 4 – Engaged learners are socially committed:

This level is marked by a sense of social confidence derived from learning. As a result, your learners are more likely to engage in a culture of [social learning](#) and [knowledge-sharing](#).

Level 5 – Engaged learners pursue continuous learning:

By this stage, learners are fully committed to your learning programme. When learners are deeply engaged, they enter a brain-body connection, or what we call the flow state.

This [state](#) has been shown to increase learners' propensity to pursue learning on a daily basis. In turn, this is what will drive employees to sustain healthy learning habits.

The Neuroscience of Learner Engagement

Next, let's explore learner motivation and behaviour in more detail. And no, it's not about dangling a carrot (or some other reward) in front of your learners.

It's also not about having the slickest, shiniest learning platform in the land. Securing your team's undying devotion to your learning programme goes a lot deeper than that.

The answer? It's getting to the heart, or rather the brain of the matter! And you can achieve this by understanding the neuroscience of learner engagement.

Simply put, it's all about seeing how our brains work in the context of learning. In turn, this knowledge will aid you in boosting your training strategies, so you can attain the highest level of engagement from your learners.

Without further ado, here are nine neuroscience facts that will help you to encourage your learners to fall in love with their training experiences!



1. High learner engagement strengthens the brain's memory and attention circuits

The [prefrontal cortex](#), or the executive function of the brain, is at its optimal state when learners are engaged. This area is what helps us to focus, play with ideas, use our [working memory](#) and think before reacting in any situation.

Studies show that memory and attention span scores can improve by around [30% with gameplay](#). This leads to improved learning and productivity outcomes.

Training Tip:

Gameplay strengthens the executive function of your brain by improving memory and attention span. Consider [gamifying](#) your online learning activities to improve learning comprehension and retention among your learners.

2. Learner motivation and activity is directed by the limbic brain

Our brain scans the environment [five times per second](#) for stimuli that may lead to either a threat or a reward.

As such, high engagement in training is often driven by lighting up our [brain's reward centres](#). These are located in the [limbic brain](#). Similarly, disengagement is often characterised by the activation of our brain's [threat circuitry](#).

Training Tip:

[The SCARF Model](#) blends a wide range of social, cognitive and affective neuroscience findings into five domains of threat or reward. By maximising rewards and minimising threats, L&D managers can increase learner engagement.

One way to achieve this is to provide your learners with active feedback. This helps to minimise feelings of threat by reducing any uncertainty.

3. Dopamine stimulates high learner engagement and excitement

Our brain loves a good challenge. It also constantly seeks novelty. When our brain is fed these two things, it rewards us by releasing [dopamine](#). This is known as the ‘feel good’ neurotransmitter because it, well... makes us feel good.

Learners are treated to a good dose of dopamine when learning material comes with enough challenges and new surprises. In the L&D world, you might call this the “learner’s high”.

When your audience is high on learning (thank you, dopamine!), they will naturally seek out more content to maintain this happy state.

Training Tip:

[Gamification](#) is a powerful way to transform dull learning into an exciting and addicting affair. The use of game mechanics such as [Experience Points](#) (XP) and [Badges](#) encourages learners’ constant craving for discovery and rewards.

4. Our brains can only absorb and process a set amount of information

Our brains have a [limited capacity](#) for absorbing information. When learners face an overwhelming amount of information, the brain produces [cortisol](#). This is known as the stress hormone. Unfortunately, high levels of this chemical can disrupt memory retrieval and the ability to absorb information.

Stress is a critical factor that has led to over [51% of US workers](#) becoming disengaged at work. Similarly, [41% of workers](#) say that stress leads to a loss in productivity.

As such, instructional methods should avoid overloading the brain with too much training material. This will prevent you from overwhelming your learners and reduce your dropout rate significantly.

Training Tip:

Reduce [cognitive overload](#) with [microlearning](#). This enables you to break up your learning material into manageable chunks to aid in better absorption.

5. Serotonin keeps learners engaged for a long time

Studies show that [74% of employees](#) derive job satisfaction from having a sense of purpose in their workplace. In turn, this encourages them to stay with their companies for longer.

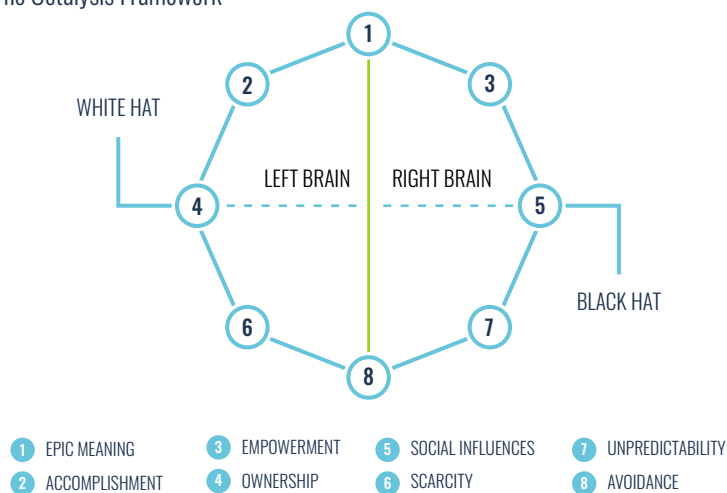
Similarly, when employees are satisfied with your learning, they are likely to remain engaged with it for a long time.

[Serotonin](#) is a hormone that governs our overall mood. We could consider serotonin to be the brain’s trusty cheerleader. It’s instrumental in helping to satisfy and sustain learner engagement levels.

How do you release this happy hormone? Ensure your training programme links to your audience’s desire for purpose. To do this, your learning incentives should be tied to [intrinsic motivations](#).

These [motivations](#) may vary for different types of learners. This is why you should devote as much time as necessary to really understand your audience’s needs.

The Octalysis Framework



Training Tip:

The [Octalysis Framework](#) can guide you when it comes to designing gamified learning filled with Epic Meaning. This framework will help you determine which game mechanics will resonate best with your learners' internal drives and values.

6. Social learning builds the brain's neural pathways

Our brains have evolved to constantly seek [social support and connection](#) with others. In fact, our reward centres light up during positive social interactions. This strengthens our neural pathways, which aids in better decision-making and goal-directed behaviour.

[Social learning](#) stimulates positive emotions, [neuroplasticity](#) and better learning outcomes. Studies show that social learning drives [75%](#) of the knowledge employees obtain in the workplace.

It has also been shown that learners who use social features engage in [30x more hours](#) of learning content than those who don't. As such, adding social functionality to your online learning technology can greatly enhance engagement levels.

Training Tip:

Our mobile app, [Growth Engineering Learning App](#), comes with social functionality like [Clubs](#) and social feeds. This helps you to create a thriving social environment that fulfils learners' need for community and support. What's more, these features help to facilitate real-time interactions and knowledge sharing.

7. Oxytocin builds trust in your learning programme

There's no question that trust is an essential ingredient in any healthy relationship. In the L&D world, this means earning the trust of your learners so that they choose to engage with your learning programme.

A Harvard study shows that employees who work in companies with a high trust culture experience [74% less stress](#). They are also found to be more engaged and are twice as productive!

Luckily, we can call on the help of [oxytocin](#). This is the brain's bonding hormone. Positive social interactions trigger the brain to release this chemical. In turn, this neurotransmitter increases feelings of trust and security.

Similarly, personal or familiar surroundings can also stimulate oxytocin. This is because they lower the threat of uncertainty and unpredictability.

As such, you can encourage the release of this comfort-inducing hormone by [personalising](#) your learning programme. You can do this by creating custom training content to suit different learner types. You should also strive to keep lines of communication open throughout your audience's [learning journey](#).

Training Tip:

[Growth Engineering Authoring Tool](#)

can help you to create personalised microunits and quizzes for your learners. You can then easily upload this content to our online learning platform or mobile app.

8. Deep engagement happens when learners enter the “flow state”

[Research](#) shows that the best moments of our lives are when our bodies and minds are voluntarily engaged in a particular activity. This is what we might call being ‘in the zone’ or a ‘flow state’.

The [science](#) shows us that this state can only be achieved with deliberate intention and effort. It is also important to recognise that certain activities are better suited to promote a flow state than others.

Deep engagement in learning is one of these activities. This happens when learners are mentally, emotionally and physiologically engaged at the same time.

The flow state also helps your learners to feel a sense of competence in their abilities. In turn, this motivates them to keep learning and growing.

As such, achieving the highest state of learner engagement isn't just about activating one area of the brain.

Instead, it's a coordinated effort of both our thinking and emotional brain systems. More importantly, it also means addressing psychological and physiological needs.

Training Tip:

Create an optimal learning environment by approaching learner engagement with a holistic view. Seek to create healthy learning experiences that will nourish your employees' overall well-being.

9. A strong hippocampus facilitates effective long-term learning

Our brain's reward system encourages us to repeat desirable behaviours.

Over time, this is what [forms habits](#). And habits are the foundation of behaviour change. You can't have one without the other.

The [hippocampus](#) is an area of the limbic brain that facilitates the formation of habits. It does this by linking both working and long-term knowledge.

In the context of learning, highly engaged employees show a strong activation in this region.

As such, learner engagement is all about getting employees to form healthy learning habits. And when they do, you can thank the hippocampus for it!

Training Tip:

Habits are formed when learners associate your learning programme with positive experiences. With this in mind, you should carefully tailor your learning management system and communication plan to delight and excite your audience.

In Conclusion

Our brains are wired to seek out enjoyable learning experiences.

By understanding how and why our brains work, you can craft better learning programmes for your learners and employees.

Real engagement can only happen when various brain functions operate in a harmonious and balanced way.

You can achieve this optimal learning state when your employees are filled with a healthy synergy of happy hormones, Epic Meaning and an overall sense of wellbeing.

As such, it is best to design your learning programmes with a holistic view of the needs of your learners. This requires considering their cognitive, emotional and physiological states.

Doing so ensures that your employees are learning at a highly engaged level. In turn, this is what will drive real behaviour change and create a lasting impact in your workplace.



LEARNER ENGAGEMENT: HOW DOES IT IMPACT YOUR BUSINESS?

Engagement on its own isn't useful unless it leads to the right kind of results. The next step is to determine whether your learning programme is creating a real impact on your business.

'What kind of impact?' you may ask. Well, the kind that makes your business more productive and profitable. Recent stats show that companies with engaged learners can generate **218%** higher income per employee. These companies also enjoy a **24%** higher profit margin!

As such, we cannot dispute the power of a great learning programme in driving impressive business results. Unfortunately, only **8%** of CEOs say that they see an impact from their learning initiatives. Why are so many learning programmes failing to provide the kind of value we know we should expect?

This problem is confounded by the fact that only **35%** of L&D professionals evaluate the business value of their learning programmes. How can you demonstrate your value if you don't know your value?

Here at Growth Engineering, our mission is to save you from becoming part of that sad statistic! This article will shine a light on the link between learner engagement and business impact.

What's more, we'll show you how to effectively measure and communicate the business value of your training efforts.

Ready to make an impact? Then let's get started!

What Does Business Impact Mean for L&D Teams?

Delivering business impact is no walk in the park. After all, if you're a learning professional, it's the very reason why your job exists. And thanks to the pandemic and other contributing factors, the pressure to deliver is stronger than ever.

A LinkedIn report shows a **159%** increase in CEOs who are now expecting L&D to solve key business challenges. This need has been accelerated by a rapidly evolving and unpredictable business environment.

Similarly, **66%** of L&D executives agree that their role now has a much more strategic focus.

What does this mean for L&D teams? Well, it means that you've got some big shoes to fill! To get you started, let's define what business impact means.

Business impact refers to the key outcomes of any business activity that provides real value to your organisation.

Here are some of the most common types of business impact you may hope to achieve with your learning programme:

- **Revenue Impact:** How is your training increasing sales?
- **Cost Efficiency:** How is your training reducing costs in the short and long term?
- **Value Impact:** What value is your training adding to business processes or your brand? How is it adding value to your direct and indirect stakeholders?
- **Minimising Risk:** How is your training reducing the natural risks present in your organisation? How is it able to help minimise or prepare for threats?

Like many things in life, success is often associated with the financial value it brings. In the case of L&D, business impact will ultimately boil down to how much money you can help your business earn or save.

The Link Between Learner Engagement And Business Impact

Here at Growth Engineering, we recognise the value of learner engagement.



We also understand that it's difficult to generate the levels of learner engagement required to produce real results.

Unfortunately, running a training programme without learner engagement is like driving a train short on fuel. Your programme will inevitably lose steam and fail to meet its objectives. If you want your training to have a lasting impact, it needs to be fueled by a [high-performance learning culture](#) (HPLC).

And the latest stats prove it! Organisations with HPLCs have [a 10x](#) more sustainable impact on growth, productivity and profitability. Similarly, a Towards Maturity research report finds that [99%](#) of leaders recognise the powerful positive impact of having an HPLC.

A high-performance learning culture is what links learner engagement and desirable business outcomes. However, less than [one in five](#) organisations manage to achieve an HPLC.

But don't let this daunt you! In fact, an HPLC will naturally form when employees become deeply engaged and committed to learning. In turn, this is what will help you to drive business impact and soar to new heights!

But what does it take to arrive at a high-performance learning culture? We've broken the process down into five key stages:

Stage 0: Pre-Engagement / Disengagement

A Gallup report finds that [51%](#) of employees are disengaged in the workplace. Luckily, you can avoid the death knell of poor engagement with proper planning.

This is the stage where you build your training programme around your learners' needs and motivations.

Did You Know: It takes 400 repetitions to make a new synapse in the brain. Gamification can reduce the required iterations to just [20](#)!

Stage 1: Increased Competence & Desire to Perform Well

This is where engagement starts. Employees are mentally engaged and challenged by the learning material. As a result, they comprehend and retain information better. This increases their confidence and desire to keep learning.

Did You Know: Microlearning has been shown to increase engagement and information retention by [20%](#).

Stage 2: Self-Development & Personal Growth

This is the stage where learners become emotionally invested in their training. They believe that your learning programme will help them make progress and achieve their personal goals.

Their [sense of purpose](#) is also in line with your organisation's objectives and values.

Did You Know: [Purpose-driven](#) companies experience [40%](#) higher levels of workforce retention than their competitors.

Stage 3: Increased Creativity & Proactiveness

At this stage, learners are starting to apply their learning creatively in the workplace. They are also proactively seeking out learning opportunities to reinforce their knowledge.

Did You Know: [72%](#) of employees say that gamified features inspire them to work harder.

Stage 4: Improved Communication & Collaboration

This is where the seeds of a learning culture start to germinate! At this stage, employees are now actively engaging in social learning activities.

They will continue to build their knowledge with the support and feedback of their peers and instructors. They are also eager to share knowledge and collaborate with others.

Did You Know: [74%](#) of companies agree that [knowledge sharing](#) can improve productivity by up to [40%](#).

Stage 5: Nurturing a High-Performance Learning Culture

Congratulations, you have now reached the ultimate stage of learner engagement! At this point, learners are mentally, emotionally and socially engaged. They have acquired desired learning habits and have embraced continuous learning.

Did You Know: High-performing companies are [5x](#) more likely to have thriving learning cultures compared to low performers.

The Result: Behaviour Change & Productivity

A high-performance learning culture is the missing link needed to drive productive behaviours in the workplace. In turn, this is what will help drive desired business outcomes. But don't just take our word for it! The numbers speak for themselves.

Here are some stats that demonstrate the impact of a high-performance learning culture:

- [55%](#) reduction in delivery time
- [12%](#) increase in productivity

- [12%](#) surge in customer satisfaction
- [26%](#) boost in staff satisfaction

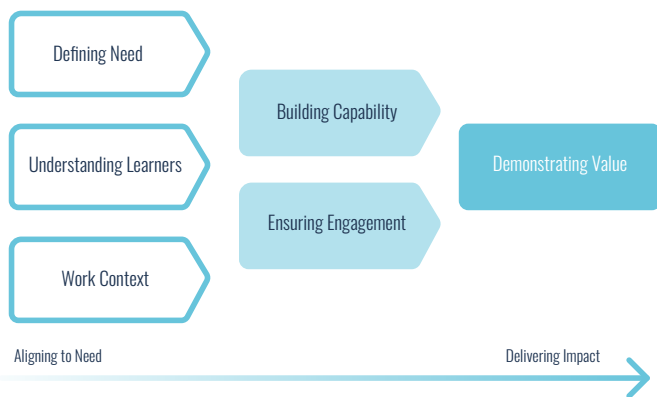
How to Deliver a High-Impact Training Programme

Now we understand the link between learner engagement and business impact, we need to look at the practicalities. How can you start pulling a high-impact training programme together?

Setting performance benchmarks will help to guide you in the right direction.

Here is where we can enlist the help of The Towards Maturity Model™, a highly regarded benchmarking framework, drawing from over 4,700 learners and 600 L&D leaders worldwide.

This model shows the six pillars followed by high-performing learning organisations.



We've consolidated these pillars into three neat steps you can implement:

Step 1: Align Learning Strategies With The Needs Of Your Stakeholders

Be clear on what your key stakeholders expect and require from you. This includes members of your senior management team, other business units and your learners themselves. Unfortunately, only [23%](#) of L&D professionals identify metrics in partnership with senior managers.

Don't be part of this statistic! Make sure you're measuring success properly by collaborating with your organisation's leaders.

Step 2: Drive Engagement And Build An HPLC

A high-performance learning culture can only be possible with the right learning tools in place. These tools help to create an engaging environment suitable for continuous learning.

For instance, online learning technologies can produce a whopping [18%](#) boost in employee engagement. Similarly, [72% of global organisations](#) see learning management systems as a competitive advantage.

Step 3: Deliver And Measure Business Impact

We often hear the phrase "data is king". This is for a good reason. Data helps businesses to make effective decisions. And data-driven organisations see a [79%](#) higher return on equity.

As such, now is the time to improve your learning analytics proficiency. Doing so can help you better measure and demonstrate the value of your training.

In the next section, we'll take a closer look at how you can use learning metrics to achieve epic training impact!

How To Track And Measure The Right Engagement Metrics

Many of today's businesses are faced with tough budget decisions. Unfortunately, it often seems like L&D budgets are the first on the chopping block when the going gets tough.

For us in the people business, we know better! The right L&D initiatives are what equip employees with the capabilities to stay competitive.

In fact, a [McKinsey report](#) shows that capability building is now even more valuable than it was before the pandemic struck. Similarly, research confirms that investing in employees can drive productivity up by [8.5%](#)!

The best way to silence the cynics is to develop an effective success measurement strategy. By setting and tracking the right metrics, you'll have a clear picture of what good looks like and will be able to refine your initiatives accordingly.

It will also help keep your senior management team smiling and protect your L&D budget.

From individual goals to collective behaviour change, here are some useful measures to track throughout your learning programme:

Pre-Engagement Phase:

Launching an effective training programme isn't something you can do at a moment's notice. It requires thought, effort and application at every stage of the process. Perhaps most importantly, it requires a mighty heap of preplanning so that you can ensure you are tracking the measures that matter.

One surefire way to get your metrics in order is to establish control groups. This will provide you with two pieces of information. Firstly, it will show how your training campaign is impacting your bottom line. Secondly, it will highlight how different learning variables are impacting learner engagement.

For example, say you have two sales groups: Team A & Team B. Team A will be undertaking your sales training, while Team B won't. In this way, you would be able to isolate the impact of training on improving engagement and productivity in the workplace. This can be done by simply comparing the performance of the two groups.

Conducting pre-learning assessments may also help you identify any knowledge gaps that need to be addressed. They can also be useful in assessing how engaged your learners are before the start of their training journey.

Doing so will help you determine the metrics you should be focusing on throughout their training.

Engagement Phase (Stages 1-4):

It's time to bring out your laser lens and zoom in on your learners' behaviours. Tracking learner engagement is a must if you want to achieve great results from your training programme.

At this stage, the right learning metrics are the ones that provide a holistic view of learner engagement. Your metrics should track how mentally, emotionally and socially engaged your learners are. For instance, these engagement metrics might include:

- Mandatory / voluntary programmes consumed
- Learning time spent
- Community engagement
- Feedback surveys
- Completion & drop-out rates
- Pre & post-training assessment scores

However, manually tracking these metrics may prove to be a time-consuming and tedious task. But with the right tools in place, you'll be able to save time and focus on what truly matters: building more engagement! To do this, you'll need to have the right reporting tools in place. For instance, Growth Engineering LMS's [Reporting Suite](#) automates many parts of this tracking process for you.

Our real-time dashboard lets you see how often users log in, what content they access and their assessment performance on an individual or group basis.

It also provides you with customised reports that showcase how well your learners are progressing within the learning environment.

High Impact Phase (Stage 5):

Ah, so the engagement stats are pouring in, and it seems like you've unlocked the holy grail of learner engagement. Employees are whizzing through your training materials and hitting one learning milestone after another.

Whilst it's great to ace your engagement metrics, now comes the more exciting and ultimately more important part.

It's time to link the impact of your training to the metrics that really matter. You need to show that your training initiatives are helping your organisation to achieve its goals and objectives.

The best way to do this is to show a clear link between L&D metrics, like training hours, and business outcomes, like monthly sales. Below are some more examples of high-impact metrics to track at this stage:

- Cost per lead
- Productive hours
- Inquiry response time
- Customer complaints
- Increased sales
- Pitch / lead success rate
- Cost-savings linked to training

When you're able to prove this link, you're also ready to pop out the champagne bottle and celebrate. Cheers!

Communicating the Business Impact of Learner Engagement

What good is generating business value if nobody knows about it? As mentioned earlier, most CEOs are unaware of how their L&D functions are impacting their business.

With this being the case, you run the risk of losing support and budget regardless of how successful you may have been. As such, it's up to you to highlight the impact that your learning programme is having on your organisation.

The [latest stats](#) show that securing executive buy-in is one of the top challenges faced by L&D teams. Similarly, demonstrating the [value of learning](#) continues to be a top concern for many learning professionals.

With L&D budgets and management support at stake, the case is clear. Communicating the business impact of any L&D endeavour can be difficult. So this begs the question: how can you communicate business impact in the most effective way possible?

The secret sauce is in the way you tell the story. Cognitive psychologist Jerome Bruner states that we're [22 times](#) more likely to remember a fact if it's told in the form of a narrative.

Like any good storyteller, you need to relate with your audience. Start by establishing a 'plot' that will resonate with your business leaders.

Isolate the business goals that matter to them. Then establish what you've done to help move the dial, how impact has been tracked and what the results have been.

We recommend breaking your narrative down into three clear acts. Let's take a look at an example of this in action.

Act 1: The Challenge

Prior to our training programme, retail sales were in decline. We believe this was due to poor customer service and support, as evidenced by low net promoter scores.

As such, we realised that our retail teams needed to undergo a detailed customer service training programme.

Act 2: The Solution

Our L&D team introduced a training campaign supported by a variety of engagement techniques. The aim was to re-engage service reps with their training and inspire them to boost their performance.

The learning programme delivered microlearning modules tackling a range of key customer-focused topics.

Act 3: The Impact

As a result of this training programme, we have seen a marked improvement in positive customer feedback, supported by an X% increase in our net promoter score. Furthermore, learners who complete their training record an average basket size X% bigger than learners who do not.

Presenting business impact as a story is what will give your learning programme the thunderous applause and support it deserves.

It's all about finding out what matters to your stakeholders and communicating L&D success in the clearest possible terms. As it's the leadership team, noting the positive financial implications is likely to resonate strongly.

In Conclusion

Learner engagement is at the heart of every successful training programme. Its ultimate value comes from its ability to improve the financial position of your organisation.

As such, a high-performance learning culture can propel your training forward and help you hit your desired learning goals. In turn, this is what will drive real behaviour change and business impact for your organisation.

It is also important to identify and measure the right metrics at every phase of your learning programme. This will ensure you stay on track and achieve the right business outcomes. And when it's time to face your stakeholders, never underestimate the power of a good narrative!



DIGITAL LEARNING FATIGUE AND ENGAGEMENT

Now we know the impact that engagement can have on your organisation. However, as we've seen throughout this guidebook, learner and employee engagement is one of the biggest challenges organisations and L&D professionals face today.

Occasionally, there are more severe issues behind this lack of engagement, such as digital learning fatigue.

In recent years, the working world has undergone a tsunami of change. Remote or hybrid work environments are commonplace and digital transformation is moving at an [unprecedented pace](#).

This new digital landscape has given rise to a phenomenon called 'digital fatigue'. Unfortunately, the world of online training and learning technology is not free from this scourge.

Digital fatigue prevents us from focusing and engaging to the fullest. After all, our minds are working in overdrive to process the overstimulation of fully digital experiences.

Considering that the future of training and working looks increasingly hybrid, it's essential that we find a way to overcome these challenges. Only then can we unlock the highest levels of engagement.

Before we look at the ten best ways L&D professionals can engage their employees and learners, let's explore the current digital fatigue crisis in more detail.

What Is Digital Fatigue?

Digital fatigue is not a new term. It is a state of mental exhaustion which occurs after an intense amount of screen time. At some stage, we all reach a point of saturation, where we need to down our digital tools.

This is often also referred to as 'digital learning fatigue', 'Zoom fatigue' or simply just 'online fatigue'.

In other words, digital fatigue is a stage where individuals experience weariness that is caused by constantly being plugged in.

Before COVID-19 changed the working world, digital fatigue was predominant among individuals working from home.

As such, such exhaustion was not typically common among office workers, students or teachers.

Now that remote and hybrid working is the new norm, more and more people are experiencing digital fatigue. In fact, according to the 2021 Digital Learning Realities survey, [70%](#) of respondents highlight digital fatigue as an issue. This has resulted in more widespread awareness of the term.

What Causes Digital Fatigue?

To fight digital fatigue, you need to understand why such exhaustion occurs and how it affects the individual. Although we all have different tolerance levels, some common causes of digital fatigue include:

- Social inequalities regarding the quality of technology used
- Connectivity issues
- Lower-resolution screens
- Poor sound quality
- Poor-quality imagery
- The feeling of intrusiveness
- The need for constant engagement
- Too many visual and audio stimuli
- Difficulty in setting time and space boundaries
- A sense of overload because of the myriad of online resources

As this list highlights, poor technology exacerbates digital fatigue. Spending hours on end in front of low-resolution screens, with bad audio quality and unengaging or overbearing media experiences, is a recipe for disaster.

As such, your learners may be worried about the quality of their online training and uncertain about how they acquire new skills. After all, learning and working may feel different in a digital format.

All these resources can also lead to sensory

overload. [Sensory overload](#) happens when your senses give you more input than your brain can process. This overload can lead to extreme irritability and restlessness, which can then lead to total digital fatigue.

In addition, society constantly reminds us of our ever-increasing screen time with [articles](#) highlighting the issues. Unfortunately, many of us don't have the choice to switch off.

In our digital new normal, we have to spend time in front of screens. Whether that's for studying, training, working, connecting with friends and family and so on.

Non-Technical Issues

However, technology is only part of the issue. Individuals with premium equipment and good connectivity can still experience a sense of intrusion that leads to digital fatigue.

Remote work makes it more difficult than ever to set boundaries and forget about our ever-lengthening task lists. Perhaps that's the reason why the average working day has increased to [10.5 hours](#) in the UK, US and Canada.

In addition, digital working or learning can make the individual feel that they are exposed 100% of the time. This does not happen in face-to-face communication situations.

But when we're online, it feels like we're being watched or tracked [constantly](#). This kind of experience can take a huge toll on a person because of our need for personal space and privacy.

Similarly, what we would consider natural silences in normal conversation often cause discomfort in a digital setting. This then leads to the feeling that individuals are required to engage at all times. And this, in turn, can lead to digital fatigue.

Symptoms of Digital fatigue

Digital fatigue has been recognised as a [concerning condition](#) with significant physical and psychological impact.

Symptoms include (but are not limited to):

- Sore or irritated eyes
- Blurred or double vision
- Pain in the neck, spine, shoulders, and wrists
- Increased sensitivity to light
- Sleeplessness
- Lack of concentration

The Impact of Digital Fatigue

Digital fatigue can have a big impact on businesses and educational institutions alike. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Lack of focus
- Decreased knowledge absorption
- Lower knowledge retention rates
- Disengagement
- Higher student dropout and employee retention rates
- Underdeveloped, unpractised or suppressed social skills
- Stress and anxiety
- Fear of isolation
- Body dysfunctionality related to movement, posture and eyesight

Digital fatigue may eventually lead to a situation of [complete burnout](#). And considering these symptoms, it's little wonder why more and more people are dreading spending another day in front of their screens.

With this in mind, L&D professionals, HR managers and decision-makers alike need to reinvent their practices to fight back against the current digital fatigue crisis.

One way to do so is to ensure your online training strategies minimise digital fatigue through effective design. After all, no one wants to complete poorly crafted training interventions after a day full of other digital activities.

As such, to prevent digital solutions from becoming an adversary, let's look at how you can fight back against digital learning fatigue whilst using online learning solutions.

Online Learning Design

Instead of embracing the advances of all the technology at your fingertips, you should rethink your design to include elements that make training interventions fun and engaging.

In fact, the digital fatigue problem does not spring from the medium itself, but in a failure to engage creatively within the medium.

As such, you should focus on rethinking the content, processes, and tools that make up your learning experiences. While the sudden shift to online learning was disruptive, it has opened up opportunities to make learning designs more engaging and impactful.



By optimising your learning design and delivery according to your audience's needs, you are guaranteed to engage your learners. In turn, you'll make them more resilient against fatigue.

But before we explore the ten best ways to improve engagement, let's have a look at some simple steps your learners can take to overcome digital fatigue.

5 Quick Tips for Learners

1. Go Back To The Basics

We know you might have heard the following multiple times before, but your working environment [really makes a difference](#).

As such, you should make sure your room is well-lit, your desk is at the correct height, and your computer settings are optimised.

You should also practise good posture and ensure your monitor has been placed [an arm's length away](#). In turn, this will all help to keep digital fatigue at arm's length. After all, this means there is less strain on your eyes and body.

2. Take Care of Your Well-Being

This is another tip that may sound obvious. But trust us, early intervention and prevention can reduce the impact of digital fatigue!



So, go on those daily walks, remember to stretch every now and then and start adding some physical activity into your daily routine.

And don't forget to [get enough sleep](#). After all, sleep enables your body to repair and prepare for the next day. This can help you to take care of your mental health.

3. Manage Your Screen Time More Efficiently

We pick up our phones a whopping [58 times](#) a day. On top of that, we are now working and studying remotely, which only adds to our ever-increasing screen time.

And while all those funny TikTok dances or trendy Instagram feeds can be hard to resist, spending too much time staring at a screen is one of the biggest reasons for digital fatigue. As such, we recommend [managing your screen time](#). You should start by identifying where your screen time is spent before aligning it with your priorities. You can then see which tasks can be done with an old-fashioned pen and paper.

For example, planning your day in a notepad or outlining a memo is simple and gives you a much-needed break from staring at your screen. In addition, you could try turning off notifications and scheduling screen-free breaks.

4. Interact With Your Peers and Educators

A boring or difficult topic suddenly becomes a lot more interesting and easily digestible when you discuss it with someone else. This also provides you with an opportunity to experience some valuable social interactions.

The more you interact and engage, the greater your interest will be in the class or topic at hand.

It's always beneficial to engage and interact in a virtual classroom session. But don't limit it there! You can make online learning a lot more fun and collaborative by utilising some of the social learning features integrated into your training programme.

5. Provide Feedback About Your eLearning Design

The transition to remote work and online learning was as sudden for educators as it was for learners. Therefore, you as a learner, can assist in supercharging eLearning design by offering useful feedback on your course.

Your feedback could touch on the eLearning content, platform design and its features. It could be positive feedback or constructive criticism — as long as it's honest, direct and clearly presented.

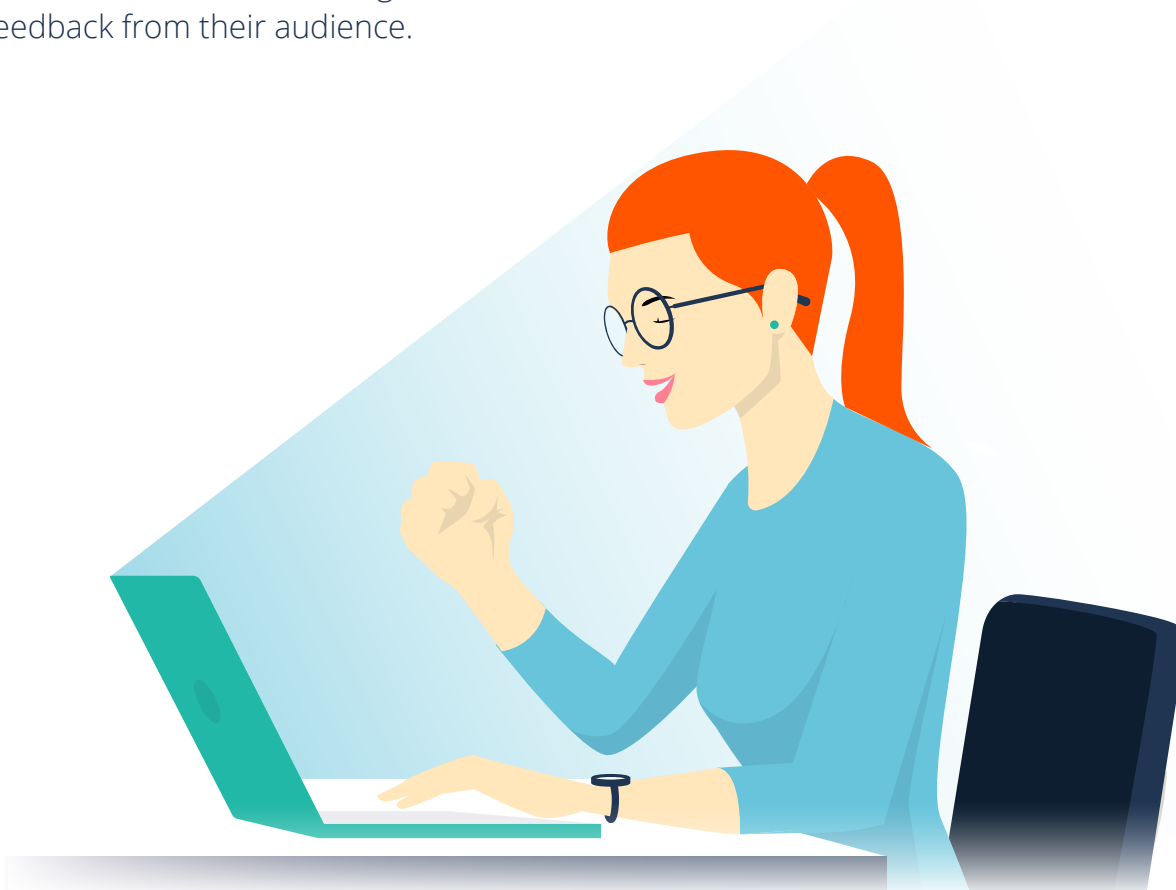
Student feedback offers an important source of ideas when it comes to enhancing eLearning design. In addition, improving engagement and learner interest is easier to achieve when educators get first-hand feedback from their audience.

In Conclusion

Since the quick shift to more digital working worlds and learning environments, digital fatigue has become a real issue. And while it may seem like a buzzword, digital fatigue can have serious physical and mental consequences.

Luckily, there is a lot that can be done! After all, the digital medium is not the cause. The problem lies with how the medium is typically used.

We have looked at five steps every learner and employee can take to prevent digital fatigue. Next up? Our 10 top tips that help you to supercharge engagement levels!



10 TOP TIPS TO IMPROVE LEARNER ENGAGEMENT

The right engagement strategies ensure that your audience displays the right attitudes and behaviours towards learning. Otherwise, you face the very real threat of a failed training programme, which can cost you enormous amounts of time, money and resources.

So, let's not subject learners to training that isn't utterly fantastic. Luckily for you, we're here to save the day with these learner engagement tips.

This will help you assemble a team of learning superheroes in a flash, while ensuring they are in the best mindset for learning!

10 Tips To Improve Learner Engagement

1. Variety Is the Spice of Learning

Why does boredom set in after eating the same food too many times? Why do we tire of hearing the same song too often? What makes us chase one new experience after another?

We are wired to [crave variety and stimulation](#). Too much of the same thing gives way to boredom or frustration. New and varied experiences, on the other hand, light up our [brain's reward centres](#). As such, whether it's trying out a new recipe or mixing up learning tactics, variety keeps things fresh and exciting!

And what better way to stimulate and engage your learners than with a training programme packed with colour and variety?

As a learning professional, you may benefit from taking a page from the marketing

playbook. After all, [56%](#) of marketers are creating more image-based content to appeal to their audience. That should be your cue to do the same thing!

Today's stats also show that modern learners are [75%](#) more likely to watch videos than read documents and articles. As such, you should seek to mix up the content you share with your learners.

You should include a variety of content styles and multimedia, including images, videos, podcasts and quizzes alongside your more traditional content.

Why is this? Because different content formats have different superpowers! Videos, for example, are more memorable and get shared [1200% more](#) than text.

Luckily, today's learning management systems, like [Growth Engineering LMS](#), let you use a variety of content types to build effective and engaging training plans.

This includes everything from presentation slides and PDF documents to videos, audio files, interactive documents and eLearning.

2. Make a Big Impact with Microlearning

Two goldfish are having a conversation in a fish tank. One of them suddenly forgets what he was saying, to which the other replies, “oh Brian, you have the memory of a human”.

This sounds like a joke, but it isn't one. Reports suggest that humans now have an [attention span of 8 seconds](#), which is worse than a goldfish!

Whilst the research [is disputed](#), it's certainly true that we have more sources of distraction vying for our attention than ever before. As a result, if you wish to engage your learners, you need to provide them with short bursts of learning that will hold their focus.

[Microlearning](#) helps you to break learning material down into bite-sized chunks. While there are no official time limitations or rules as to what is considered 'micro', this type of content typically lasts between 5 to 10 minutes. This helps our brains to absorb and process information better.

But don't just take our word for it! Studies show that microlearning creates [17%](#) more learning efficiency. It can also improve focus and long-term retention by up to [80%](#).

As such, it comes as no surprise that a whopping [94%](#) of learning & development professionals prefer microlearning over traditional approaches. After all, it enables a quicker production process which helps you to meet your training needs faster than ever before.

[Growth Engineering Authoring Tool](#) can help you to create high-impact microlearning content. This can be easily uploaded to your

online learning platform or app. It's time to wave goodbye to day-long PowerPoint sessions and embrace magical microlearning experiences.

3. Level Up with Gamification

Why do we love games so much? Neuroscience reveals that games stimulate a rush of [heady hormones](#) that make us feel happy and engaged. Gamification has a similar effect on us.

Here at Growth Engineering, [we define](#) gamification as the application of game mechanics to a non-gaming environment to make tasks more engaging. Simply put, gamification can make boring tasks more fun! And who wouldn't like that?

Gamification utilises mechanics like [Experience Points](#), [Badges](#) and [Leaderboards](#). And these features help to create an incentivised learning environment. This helps to engage learners and drives increased participation. After all, when learners enjoy their training, they feel motivated and want to keep learning.

But that's not all! Gamification can improve:

- Performance
- Ability to complete chores and mundane tasks
- Organisational productivity
- Ability to enter the 'flow' state
- Knowledge retention
- Learner retention
- Communication

Impressive, right? Studies show that gamified initiatives can increase engagement by [48%](#). What's more, gamification has been shown to boost employee productivity by [90%](#). It also leads [72%](#) of employees to report feeling motivated to work harder.

It even has the power to reinforce the brain's muscles by [68%](#)! Why not build a brain that Arnold Schwarzenegger would be proud of?

4. Create Real Purpose with Epic Meaning

From chimps using tools to [sleep-talking dolphins](#), we share many similarities with animals. But what makes us special?

One of the qualities that make us unique is our ability to reflect on our actions and their impact on others. This is stirred by an innate desire for purpose. This desire is what we call Epic Meaning.

[Today's employees](#) are more motivated when their work provides them with a sense of purpose. In fact, this is what drives [73%](#) of employees to feel more engaged and satisfied in the workplace.

How can you encourage this kind of engagement? An organisation can activate Epic Meaning when it inspires its people and gets them excited about being a part of a bigger purpose.

While learning technology can help you create Epic Meaning, the only way to activate it is to listen to your learners. As such, you should focus on identifying what their values are and what activities help to fuel their sense of purpose.

Creating an engaging online learning platform starts with your company's mission, goals and values. You should make it clear why your learners' personal development matters or benefits your wider company mission.

You can then focus on engaging your audience by making sure your platform speaks to them. You could, for instance, apply a mission-filled [narrative](#) to your learning content.

After all, who among us hasn't been inspired by storytelling? Similarly, it's a great way to help your learners understand different perspectives as they progress through your content. This will add an extra layer of immersion and draw users deeper into the learning experience.

And did you know, research shows that [73%](#) of employees who report working for a "purpose-driven" company are engaged? Your learners will appreciate learning on a platform that oozes Epic Meaning.

5. Power Up Proactiveness with Personalisation

Personalisation matters. It's the difference between receiving a football shirt with your favourite team's logo and your initials stitched on the back and receiving a plain white t-shirt.

Why do we appreciate tailored gifts much more than generic ones? Because they make us feel that our personal preferences are being noticed and valued.

Personalised learning can have such a huge impact on your audience. In fact, stats show that [74%](#) of online users feel frustrated when content is not personalised for them and their needs.

What's more, this can also impact learning and business outcomes! After all, companies who implement personalisation report seeing a whopping [20%](#) increase in sales.

Considering this, it's simply not enough to provide access to learning. These generic experiences cannot provide optimised learning outcomes or long-term results. After all, a one-size-fits-all approach tends to leave many by the wayside.

Luckily, today's learning designers are in a position to address this long-standing issue.

Organisations need to adopt an approach that takes into account the frequency of training and each person's specific needs and aspirations.

So, how can you personalise your training programmes? Deep content libraries and [customised learning pathways](#) are the answer!

By using learning pathways, you can easily tailor the learning experience based on the criteria that matter most to you and your learners. This plays a big role in allowing new information to reach the right areas of the brain and be stored effectively.

6. Mobilise Modern Learners with Mobile Learning

Let's do a quick exercise! Look around your workplace and spot the [modern worker](#). Are they checking their mobile phones multiple times per hour? Do they constantly crave new knowledge? Are they excited to share what they've learned with others?

Today's workers are tech-savvy and knowledge-hungry learners. What's more, the [majority](#) of them are made up of millennials. By 2030, this group will dominate up to [75%](#) of the workforce. [97%](#) of them also own smartphones, with [91%](#) of their mobile time spent on apps.



But did you know that millennials are also the [most curious](#) generation? Despite this, they only spend a meagre [20 minutes](#) a week on focused learning. This is often because they are busy fending off a wide variety of distractions.

As such, now is the perfect time to adopt a mobile-first learning solution. In fact, [71%](#) of millennial learners prefer mobile learning over other training approaches.

[Growth Engineering Learning App](#) comes packed with gamification and social features to help keep your employees glued to their learning. It can also connect seamlessly with our LMS to ensure high-quality learning on any device.

The result? Your learners can engage with their content regardless of their physical location. Mobile learning is an excellent way to make sure even your busiest employees have the time to learn and develop their skills.

7. Create Social Superstars with Social Learning

"Man is by nature a social animal", marvels the great philosopher Aristotle. And we couldn't agree more!

We are born and wired to connect, engage and learn from others. This is what makes social learning so easy. Indeed, humans have been engaging in [social learning](#) for as long as people have been around.

This [informal type](#) of learning is carried out simply by observing or interacting with others. Each time we receive social stimulation we release oxytocin, a feel-good neurotransmitter. And this is what makes social learning so fun and engaging!

Today, [more than half of L&D professionals](#) are already using some form of social



learning in their training programmes. This has been shown to contribute to an impressive [75:1 ROI](#) over traditional web-based training.

What's more, learners who use social features spend [30x more hours](#) learning than those who don't. Furthermore, [74%](#) of organisations estimate that a knowledge-sharing culture improves productivity by up to 40%.

Give your learners the oxytocin boost they deserve by providing them with a [social learning platform](#). The following features will help you to make this success happen:

Live Chat is the communication method of choice for learners who long for instant gratification. Live Chat enables easy and immediate connection via instant messages. It provides a safe and private space to discuss issues or interests one-to-one or in groups.

A **Social Feed** is an essential part of any informal learning strategy. Learners can express their views and questions by posting to their Social Feeds. Other learners can then 'like', comment and reply to the posts.

Clubs focus on specific topics and can span your entire company or smaller groups and teams. Because Club members have a shared passion, they all have something to contribute. As such, [Clubs](#) are the perfect forum for effective knowledge sharing and collaboration.

The **Experts Area** helps your learners to find answers to topic-specific issues or queries. You can highlight your [subject matter experts](#) by granting them Expert status. As a result, when your team has a question, they know exactly who to go to.

8. Mix Things Up with Blended Learning

Everyone agrees that learning is a good thing. However, the agreement often ends there.

To this very day, an intense debate rages over how learning should be conducted. On one side are the 'trad trainers', the loyal supporters of face-to-face classroom-based learning.

On the other side are the 'cyber champs', who rally behind the benefits of online learning.

Here at Growth Engineering, we say, “why choose one when you can have both?” [Blended learning](#) combines face-to-face training with online learning to get the best of both worlds.

This approach offers flexibility and convenience to suit the modern learner. For instance, the offline aspect of blended learning lets participants enjoy the value of in-classroom training. At the same time, the model's online component allows users to pursue learning at their own pace.

In fact, statistics show that [94%](#) of learners who engage in a blended programme finish their courses successfully. [73%](#) of instructors also say that blended learning increases engagement.

What's more, mixed learning strategies have also been found to boost knowledge retention by [16.5%](#).

You can adopt a blended learning approach with the help of learning technology. Consider [online learning solutions](#) with the right features to support a mix of offline and online learning.

The best platforms will offer online learning capabilities and classroom and webinar management tools. Some, like Growth Engineering LMS, even offer [Interactive Classroom](#) options.

9. Say “I Do” to Long-Term Learner Engagement

You've captured your learners' attention, and they are now happily engaging with your learning content. But for how long?

To drive real impact, your learners need to be engaged long enough to store, recall and apply their knowledge. The key is to help your learners build positive learning habits.

The [neuroscience of learning](#) tells us that habits are formed when the actions we perform make us feel good. We can credit this to our brain's reward system, which lights up each time we engage in a pleasurable activity.

This encourages us to repeat the behaviours linked to these positive experiences. And this is what creates habits.

The [Hook Model](#) is a great guide to help your learners form desired learning habits. The model utilises the power of triggers which can prompt learners into action.

Research shows that it takes us, on average, [66 days](#) to form a new habit. As such, applying the right triggers 66 days in a row can help your learners to change their behaviour!

Get learners to (happily) commit to your training by offering them a learning experience they can fall in love with. A trigger-packed learning solution will help you to create a lasting impression on your learners.

[Push notifications](#), [Streaks](#) and [Battle Squads](#) are some of the features that come with Growth Engineering's [Impact Suite](#).



These serve as [habit-generating hooks](#) to get your learners to say 'I do' to long-term learning!

10. Find 'Engagement Gaps' Through Reporting

Achieving long-term learner engagement isn't easy. Continuous improvements must be made over time to see real and long-lasting results.

But as the old saying goes, "you can't manage what you can't measure". This is why [82%](#) of today's organisations consider reporting and analytics to be important features in any learning platform.

They recognise how the right analytics tools can level up their learner engagement strategies.

After all, reporting tools can help you easily monitor and measure your learning activities. These tools can also help you to identify any engagement gaps linked to your training.

For instance, Growth Engineering LMS's [real-time dashboards](#) give you live reports on how your learners are progressing (or not

progressing!). This will help you to monitor engagement levels and intervene where necessary.

If your learners need encouragement to help them get over the finishing line, you'll be there to cheer them on!

In Conclusion

Without a proper engagement strategy in place, your training programme is doomed to failure. But achieving true learner engagement is hard work.

Employees are not computers who can learn and run on command. We are highly complex beings driven by emotions and personal will.

This is why a good engagement strategy ties learning tactics to deeper learner motivations.

All in all, achieving learner engagement requires a long-term commitment. The right strategies and tools will ensure that your learners are mentally, emotionally and socially engaged throughout your training. In turn, this is what will drive effective learning habits and behaviour change.



THE FINAL WORD

Phew, what a wild ride it has been! We covered the basics of engagement before diving into the nitty-gritty of the current engagement challenges and various tools, strategies and solutions that help you to take learner engagement to the next level!

There are as many different engagement strategies as there are organisations and employees. What works for one might not work for another. As such, trialling different approaches and listening to your learners is a must.

Regardless, approaches like gamification, social learning and personalisation are known to be true engagement engines. They provide an excellent means for boosting your training engagement levels.

But, you must remember to tweak your approach to suit your audience. Only then will you be able to create the engagement strategy of your dreams and impact your organisation!

Here at Growth Engineering, we focus on incentivising the right activities, inspiring curiosity and creating learning communities to increase engagement. And our solutions have won multiple [awards](#) based on the impact we help our customers achieve.

Don't hesitate to [get in touch](#) if you would like to build an effective and engaging online learning programme!

IMPACT SUITE

IMPACT FUELLED BY LEARNER ENGAGEMENT!

Making an impact through learning technology is hard. Really hard. In fact, only **8%** of CEOs see an impact from their corporate learning initiatives. Your learners deserve better.

They deserve an engagement-focused learning solution powered by Epic Meaning. The Impact Suite delivers this by combining three award-winning products with unrivalled expertise from the Growth Engineering team.



LEARNER ENGAGEMENT x REAL IMPACT

L'ORÉAL

L'Oréal Travel Retail territories using our technology outperform those who don't by **20%**.

iMARKETSLIVE

iMarketsLive added **\$253m+** in revenue via sales of their instance of our mobile app solution.

World Health Organization

We've embarked on a project to improve **3bn** lives with the World Health Organization by 2030.



“ We've never seen engagement like it. ”
– Sylvie Pecheur, Global Business Partner at HP



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