

Engaged Leadership from Any Level

Introduction

While employee engagement is widely discussed, **leadership engagement is equally crucial**—if not more so. An engaged leader is **energised, present, and purpose-driven**, actively shaping their team's culture and performance. Yet, in high-pressure environments, leaders often disengage due to burnout, unclear expectations, or a lack of strategic alignment.

Why Leadership Engagement Matters:


- Companies with engaged leaders are 21% more profitable (Gallup).
- Leaders who are engaged increase team productivity by 17% and innovation by 20% (Harvard Business Review).
- Disengaged leaders create disengaged teams—resulting in 45% higher turnover rates (DDI Research).

This guide explores **what engaged leadership looks like, how to measure it, and what skills can be stacked to sustain engagement—even in challenging times.**

1. What Does Engaged Leadership Look Like?

An engaged leader:


- ✓ Aligns their daily actions with the organisation's vision and values.
- ✓ Is actively involved in team development, providing clear direction and meaningful feedback.
- ✓ Maintains presence—emotionally, mentally, and physically—in key leadership moments.
- ✓ Continuously learns, adapts, and seeks input to improve their effectiveness.
- ✓ Balances **Accountability & Care**, ensuring both performance and well-being.

 **Key Reflection:** When was the last time you felt truly engaged in your leadership role? What were the conditions that created that engagement?

2. Factors That Drive Leadership Engagement

Engagement doesn't happen by chance—it's built through **intentional habits and systems**. The following factors directly influence leadership engagement:


- ✓ **Clarity & Purpose** – Leaders who understand their impact stay motivated and resilient.
- ✓ **Autonomy & Decision-Making** – Engagement rises when leaders feel empowered to drive results.
- ✓ **Growth & Development** – Learning opportunities fuel engagement and prevent stagnation.
- ✓ **Support & Psychological Safety** – Engaged leaders have the space to make decisions and learn from mistakes.
- ✓ **Energy & Well-being** – Without sustainable habits, even the most committed leader will burn out.

 **Action:** Rank these factors from 1-5 (1 = Needs work, 5 = Strong). Identify which one needs immediate attention in your leadership role and one thing you can action today.

3. Measuring Leadership Engagement

How do you know if you (or your leaders) are engaged? Use the following **Engaged Leadership Indicators (ELI)**:

- ✓ **Consistency in Decision-Making** – Are leaders actively making and standing by decisions?
- ✓ **Presence in Critical Moments** – Do they engage meaningfully in key meetings, discussions, and one-on-ones?
- ✓ **Emotional Regulation** – Are they able to navigate stress while remaining composed and strategic?
- ✓ **Connection with Team** – Do they proactively check in and maintain trust-based relationships?
- ✓ **Drive for Results** – Are they still committed to organisational goals, even during tough times?

 **Self-Check:** Rate yourself from 1-5 on each of these indicators. Where are you thriving? Where do you need to re-engage? What is one action you can take today?

4. Skill Stacking for Leadership Engagement

Engagement isn't about **working harder**—it's about **working smarter** by leveraging **existing strengths** to maintain momentum. Use **Skills Stacking** to stay engaged, even during difficult times.


What is Skills Stacking? Skills stacking is the practice of leveraging your existing strengths to improve areas where you struggle. Instead of focusing solely on weaknesses, this approach builds momentum by using what you're already good at to drive improvement in leadership behaviours. Rather than trying to fix weaknesses from scratch, **pair an area of hesitation with a natural strength** to help bridge the gap.

- **Examples:**

- ✓ **Strength: Great at vision-setting** → Stack with **daily micro-moments of recognition** to energise the team.


- ✓ **Strength: Strong decision-maker** → Stack with **a reflection habit** to ensure alignment with long-term goals.

- ✓ **Strength: Relationship-driven** → Stack with **structured accountability** to balance care and performance.

 **Action:** Identify one strength you already have and pair it with a new habit that reinforces engagement.

5. Sustaining Engagement: Leadership Practices That Work


- ✓ **Energy Check-Ins:** Start each week by assessing your personal engagement level and adjusting accordingly. (This is going to mean finding activities for you, that fill your cup!)
- ✓ **Intentional Presence:** Block time for uninterrupted leadership moments with your team
- ✓ **Feedback Loops:** Regularly ask for input on how your leadership impacts the team.
- ✓ **Boundary-Setting:** Recognise when to step back to prevent burnout—rest is part of engagement.
- ✓ **Continuous Learning:** Engage in ongoing development that keeps leadership skills sharp and relevant.

 **Final Thought:** Leadership engagement isn't just about motivation—it's about alignment, habits, and sustainability. **When leaders stay engaged, their teams follow.** Start today by committing to **one small shift** that will improve your engagement this week.

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