



HOW EMPLOYEE PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS RELATE TO EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

What types of team members tend to be the most engaged? Those who feel a true sense of purpose and belonging in your employ.

After all, people need a sense of purpose, a sense of mattering in this world in order to be happy.

We need to feel that we are part of a community or even a cause that's larger than ourselves.

And so, when we do have that feeling of belonging, we're happier. And when we're happier, we're more engaged, productive, and active in all aspects of our lives, including our work.

Psychologists call this the “Hierarchy of Needs.”

The term comes from the psychologist Abraham Maslow, who, in a paper, he wrote in 1943 titled “**A Theory of Human Motivation**” and then in a 1953 book titled *Motivation and Personality* determined that people have *Five Different Levels of Needs*:

1. **PHYSICAL:** food, shelter, water, clothing, reproduction, rest, and health.
2. **SAFETY:** protection from violence and theft, emotional well-being, health, and financial security.
3. **LOVE AND BELONGING:** friendships and family bonds (with original family and later with a spouse, children), membership in social groups, physical touch (romantic/sexual and friendly), and intimate emotional bonds with family and friends.
4. **ESTEEM:** a feeling of being valued as an individual and deserving of dignity, confidence in personal potential, and the ability to reach goals and earn respect and esteem of others.
5. **SELF-ACTUALIZATION:** a person can realize their full potential as an individual. This entails education and learning skills. It also means developing and honing skills to the point that the individual feels their talent/skills are a bit – or a lot – higher than the skills of their peers. Skills can be in music, athletics, cooking, gardening, writing, building things, etc., as well as in caring for others, learning a new language, traveling to beautiful places, and earning/winning awards and accolades based on the level of those skills.

How this applies to Employee Engagement



LEVEL ONE (SURVIVAL) - Employees who aren't engaged.

- They leave your company as soon as possible.
- They're probably clock watchers and only begrudgingly do "extra" and only when told or asked to.
- They're working "just for the money."
- Their work doesn't excite them.

LEVEL TWO (SECURITY) - Team members who are only a bit more engaged.

- They're really interested in overtime, even though they don't particularly like their job.
- They stick it out because they need the income. They're always on the lookout for another opportunity.
- They often don't like their manager or coworkers.
- They may not be late much but they may take more sick days than one would expect.

LEVEL THREE (LOVE & BELONGING) - "Almost" engaged employees do have some sense of belonging.

- They probably will leave if a great opportunity appears, especially if it's one that speaks to their higher needs, such as esteem and self-actualization (a new job that entails a promotion, pays more, is in a field in which they're interested, helps them get closer to meeting career goals, etc.).
- They're sometimes engaged but sometimes are not.
- They usually like going to work – they enjoy their colleagues and managers – but it's not something that excites them.

LEVEL FOUR (IMPORTANCE) - Engaged team members feel they're important to the business: they sense that their work there matters, at least to their boss and/or their co-workers.

- They feel appreciated and liked by their colleagues and supervisors.
- They look at themselves as achievers and the esteem they feel about themselves at work is high.
- They feel their days are enjoyable for the most part and go quickly, yet they also may feel fairly stressed while at work.

LEVEL FIVE (SELF ACTUALIZATION) - The highly engaged (only about 15 percent of employees) feel that this job helps them reach their full potential.

- They're always looking for ways they can help others, whether it's helping a colleague out of a jam, or doing their best so that the company can win the new client, beat the deadline, create the new product, etc.
- They love, love, love going to work each day.

Speaking of motivation



The employees at levels 1 and 2 are de-motivators. Those at levels 3 and 4 are motivators.

And those at level 5? Co-workers and even managers want to **BE** them!

Of course, no job, no company can be the place where every team member feels this sense of purpose, confidence/esteem and feels part of something bigger than themselves. Some jobs do just get people by until they find something better suited to their skills and desires.

Yet, we hope that knowing a bit more about how humans' psychological needs play an essential role in their happiness at work and their quality of work will help you in your employee engagement efforts.

[Hire Dynamics](#) helps companies find talented and hard-working individuals for [companies needing help in contact centers, manufacturing, logistics, and office support.](#)

[LEARN MORE](#)