

## About PF10: Engagement

### What are Psychosocial Factors?

Psychosocial factors are elements that impact employees' psychological responses to work and work conditions, potentially causing psychological health problems. Psychosocial factors include the way work is carried out (deadlines, workload, work methods) and the context in which work occurs (including relationships and interactions with managers and supervisors, colleagues and coworkers, and clients or customers).

### What is PF10: Engagement?

GM@W defines PF10: Engagement as present in a work environment where employees feel connected to their work and are motivated to do their job well. Employee engagement can be physical, emotional and/or cognitive.

Physical engagement is based on the amount of exertion an employee puts into his or her job. Physically engaged employees view work as a source of energy. Emotionally engaged employees have a positive job outlook and are passionate about their work. Cognitively engaged employees devote more attention to their work and are absorbed in their job. Whatever the source, engaged employees feel connected to their work because they can relate to, and are committed to, the overall success and mission of their company.

Engagement is similar to, but should not be mistaken for: job satisfaction, job involvement, organizational commitment, psychological empowerment, and intrinsic motivation.

### Why is Engagement important?

Not only is employee engagement important for individual satisfaction and psychological health, but it also leads to positive outcomes for the organization. The three-year Total Return to Shareholders (TRS) for companies with engaged workforces can be double that of the average company. In addition to profitability, employee engagement is related to greater customer satisfaction, enhanced task performance, greater morale, greater motivation, and increased organizational citizenship behaviours (discretionary behaviours that are beneficial to the organization and are a matter of personal choice).

### What happens when employees aren't engaged?

A recent poll in the U.S. found that the economic impact of disengaged workers is an estimated \$300 billion annually in productivity losses. Furthermore, disengaged workers can lead to greater economic impact from psychological and medical consequences. In addition to financial hardships, a workforce that is not engaged is more likely to demonstrate greater employee turnover, workplace deviance (in the form of withholding effort), counterproductive behaviour, and withdrawal behaviours.

### How can Engagement be improved?

Start by conducting the GM@W Organizational Review and/or the GM@W Survey and reviewing the results. If **Engagement** is identified as an area of concern or relative strength, refer to the GM@W Action Resources for a practical strategy and evidence-based and effective suggested actions that can improve **Engagement**. It is also important to discuss the findings with employees to gain a further understanding of the results and to obtain input into possible interventions. Furthermore, it is important to evaluate the undertaken interventions over time to ensure they are effective and to take corrective action where needed. Consider reviewing the resources below. Finally, refer back to the GM@W website on occasion for new ideas about how **Engagement** can be enhanced.

**Further information about Engagement:**

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- Gilbert, M. & Bilsker, D. (2012). *Psychological Health and Safety: An Action Guide for Employers*. Retrieved from [http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/Workforce/Workforce\\_Employers\\_Guide\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/Workforce/Workforce_Employers_Guide_ENG.pdf)
- Harter, J. K., Schmidt, F., & Keyes, C. L. M. (2003). *Well-being in the workplace and its relationship to business outcomes: A review of the Gallup studies*. Retrieved from <http://media.gallup.com/documents/whitePaper--Well-BeingInTheWorkplace.pdf>
- Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33, 692-724. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/256287>
- Macey, W. H., & Schneider, B. (2008). The meaning of employee engagement. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 1, 3-30. Retrieved from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.182.2845&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
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- The Great-West Life Assurance Company. (2012). PF10: Engagement. In *Centre Resources by GM@W Factor and On the Agenda*. Retrieved from <http://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com>
- Trahan, B. (2007). Debunking five myths concerning employee engagement. *Public Manager*, 36(1), 53-59.

[www.guardingmindsatwork.ca](http://www.guardingmindsatwork.ca)