

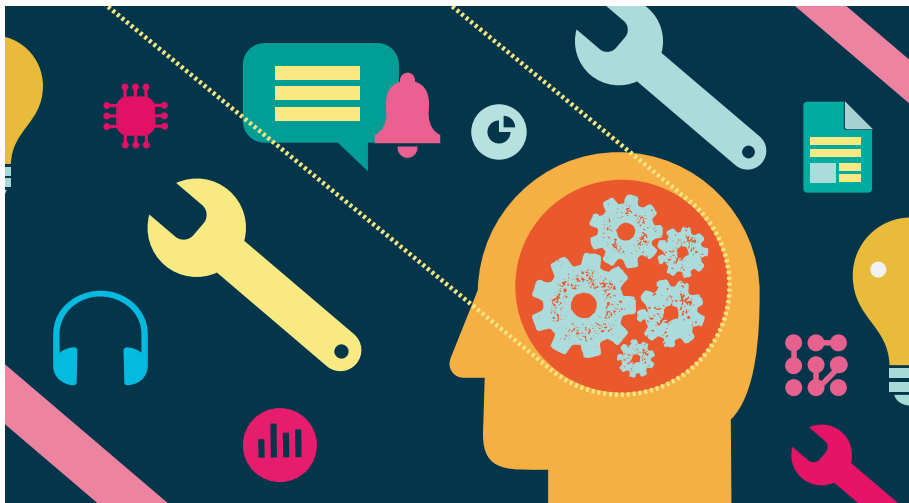
## **WANT TO IMPROVE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT? TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP!**

*“Sample questions on  
employee engagement  
surveys consistently fail to  
mention technology.”*

# WANT TO IMPROVE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT? TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP!

Address your contact center’s top priority.

BY LORI BOCKLUND, STRATEGIC CONTACT



## Would You Recommend This Center as a Place to Work?

Most employee engagement surveys have a question addressing pride in the company or whether they would recommend it as a place to work. Think about whether your agents would encourage their friends to work at your center. Chances are, if you have lousy technology, and/or not enough of it, the answer is no. Make it one of your “sniff tests” for assessing your center. Look at each bucket of technology—routing and reporting, self-service tools, workforce optimization tools, and the desktop—and determine if technology is contributing to agents saying this is a great place to work or making them hesitate. That assessment alone can speak volumes about the organization’s willingness to invest in the technology and people to achieve the mission and goals.

It is no surprise that “Improve employee engagement and empowerment” was the *top priority* in our “2019 Challenges and Priorities” survey. Attrition, often a by-product of low engagement, is always among the top *challenges*. (I can’t wait to see what we find in the soon to be released 2020 update!) On the surface, engagement doesn’t seem to be about technology, but can technology contribute to it, whether good or bad.

You’re in the Tech Corner so, no surprise, you’re going to see that, in fact, a variety of technology tools can help employees in the contact center work better with leadership and their peers and position the center as a valuable part of the organization, positively contributing to its mission—in a word (or two), *improve engagement!*

### Looking at Employee Engagement from a New Angle

Articles abound to help you define, measure and develop employee engagement. You can dive into what it is, what factors help engage people and why it matters (ROI!). Definitions are particularly interesting because they use words and phrases like emotional commitment or connection, enthusiasm, belief, dedication, motivation and passion. On the surface, it is easy to say that this is not about technology.

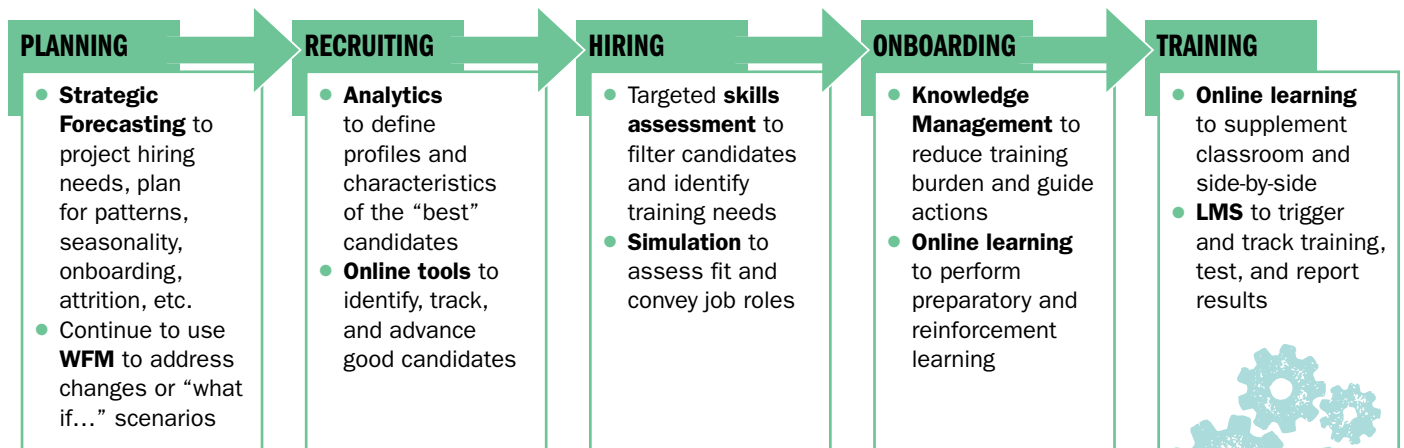
Sample questions on employee engagement surveys consistently fail to mention technology. The factors people focus on to improve engagement include things like culture, leadership, pay structures, career paths, communication, etc. They’re not think-

ing about technology, are they?! But when you get to the ROI of engagement, it starts to make a little connection to contact center technology because they mention productivity and profitability (which is of course driven by revenues and costs).

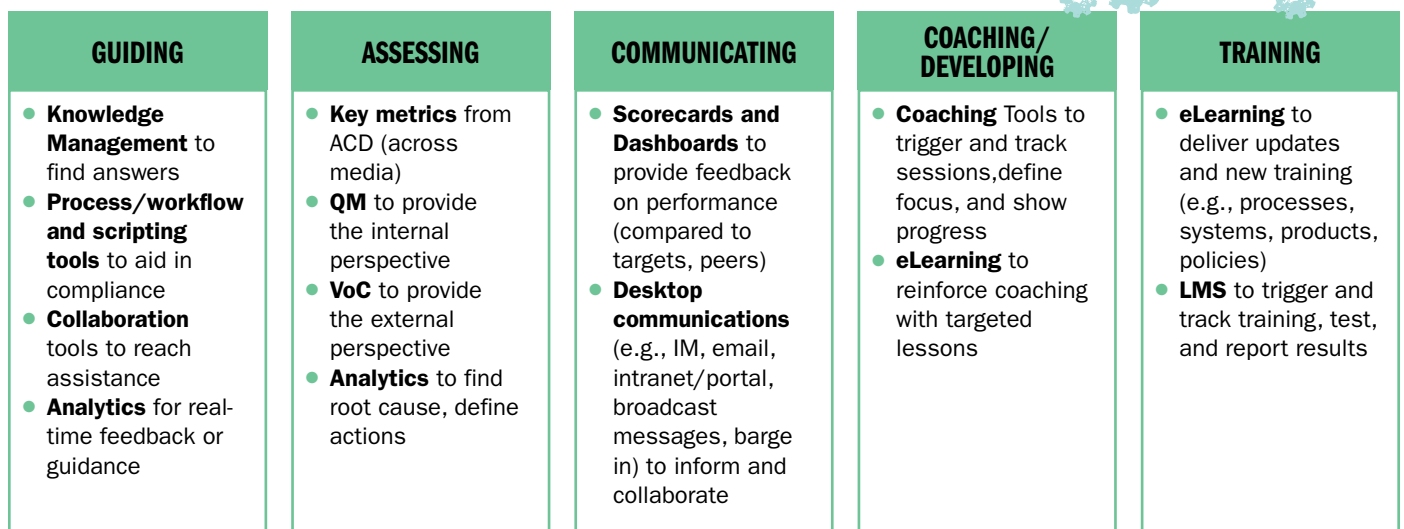
Many facets of contact center operations can impact how an agent feels about their job and how they perform. Imagine these sorts of questions bouncing around the agents’ minds (or perhaps related conversations in the break room):

- Do they care about me and treat me fairly?
- Do they want to help me grow and develop?
- Are they investing enough for the center to do what it is tasked to do?
- Do we know what they want us to accomplish, individually and as a team?
- How am I doing? Can I really succeed?

**FIGURE 1: Technology Plays an Important Role in Starting Agents on the Path to Success (and Engagement!)**



**FIGURE 2: A Variety of Tools Help Agents Succeed and Engage**



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Now, think about all the ways contact center technology can help provide positive answers to these questions. The first thought is **workforce optimization**: planning for and managing staff levels, providing feedback on performance factors such as productivity and quality, using resources well, and assessing center contributions to strategic goals. But you can also think about a wealth of other tools, like **routing** to get the right contacts to the right people, **self-service** to not burden agents with mundane tasks, and a great **desktop** with integrated applications to help them serve customers well, quickly, to resolution, with confidence. (SEE ASSIGNMENT 2)

### Many Tools in Your Engaged Employee Toolkit!

Looking at engagement from this new angle, you can define how technology can help an agent feel good about the answers to key facets of engagement. Your goal is to use technology to help agents:

- Feel like a part of a team with a good purpose
- Tie their work to organizational goals
- See measures of their success
- Have the right information and tools at their disposal to succeed at the assigned tasks
- Know where and how to get the help they need
- Have the opportunity to grow and develop

to contribute more

Figures 1 and 2 identify a wide range of technologies for a new-hire (FIGURE 1) and a production agent (FIGURE 2). Workforce Optimization tools (aka Workforce Engagement Management) cover a lot of ground. Go beyond WFM and QA and consider how analytics, scorecards, coaching and development tools can help. Knowledge Management, workflow, scripting, and event robotic process automation are critical desktop tools that make the agent’s life better. Desktop communications tools like Instant Messaging connect them with others, in real-time. eLearning and online learning are just one way centers can demonstrate their com-

Continued on page 5

**Employee Engagement as Defined by Wikipedia:**  
 Employee engagement is a fundamental concept in the effort to understand and describe, both qualitatively and quantitatively, the nature of the relationship between an organization and its employees.

**ASSIGNMENT 1: TIE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT METRICS TO TECHNOLOGY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

If you have an employee engagement survey\*, review each item on the survey and assess and plan.

- 1. **Assess:** Does our current technology impact this aspect of engagement, and if so, positively or negatively?
- 2. **Plan:** Are there ways we can use technology to improve this aspect of engagement?

- Through changes to current use of technology?
- Through new technology?

\* And if you don't have a survey, use these or other sample questions to do an assessment anyway!

Some questions from your survey may not apply, but others may be a direct fit for what your center is doing (or not doing) with technology. We populated **TABLE 1** with a few examples from common Employee Engagement Survey questions to get your juices flowing on this exercise.

**TABLE 1: Tie Employee Engagement Metrics to Technology Issues and Opportunities**

Employee Engagement Survey Question (rating 1-5)	<b>ASSESS:</b> Does our current technology impact this facet of engagement, positively or negatively?	<b>PLAN:</b> Identify ways to use technology to improve employees' engagement—through changes to current use or plans for the future.
I know what is expected of me.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Example of Positive impact:</b> We provide scorecards and dashboards with strong visuals so an agent always knows how they are doing.</li> <li>• <b>Example of Negative impact:</b> Agents do not have any visibility to performance, or get reports for which they have no context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Example:</b> Pursue workforce optimization tools: provide visibility to performance, show trends and comparisons to targets. Include coaching tools to make sure we follow through on feedback and support development.</li> </ul>
I have the tools and training to succeed at my job.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Example of Positive impact:</b> We have technology such as an excellent, dynamic knowledge base, workflow tools, and CRM.</li> <li>• <b>Example of Negative impact:</b> Our desktop is messy with more than 15 applications that agents have to navigate with little automation and integration; they are often overwhelmed and frustrated.</li> </ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Our team works together to achieve goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Example of Positive impact:</b> Agents have collaboration tools like instant messaging and persistent workspaces so they can contact each other and the support/ leadership. They rate and contribute to knowledge base updates. We see group performance and celebrate!</li> <li>• <b>Example of Negative impact:</b> Calls get routed to the wrong place and people have to transfer them. Agents must leave their desk or turn to a neighbor for help. The SharePoint site is out of date and difficult to find what they need.</li> </ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
I would recommend this organization as a place to work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Example of Positive impact:</b> We plan for, hire and train people so we have enough staff to do the work. Staff have the tools they need to meet their performance goals and succeed in helping customers.</li> <li>• <b>Example of Negative impact:</b> The staffing levels are inadequate and based only on budgeted headcount (no planning based on workload). The work is overwhelming because we have so many systems and processes to learn and none of it is integrated or automated.</li> </ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>


**ASSIGNMENT 2: “SNIFF TEST” FOR TECHNOLOGY ENABLING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

Use **TABLE 2** to assess your technology and whether it contributes to or discourages employee engagement. For each category of technology,

give it a rating (“Contributes” or “Discourages”—or more simply, thumbs up or down). Then note what the problems are and what you can do about them.

**TABLE 2: “Sniff Test” for Technology Enabling Employee Engagement**

Technology Category	Contributes to or Discourages Agent Engagement	What are the Problems?	What can we DO?
Omnichannel Routing and Reporting			
Self-service (IVR, web, mobile)			
Workforce Optimization Tools			
Desktop Tools			



**OUR FAVORITE ENGAGERS**  
**A brainstorming session with my team identified some great ways technology gets used to enhance employee engagement:**

- Use advanced visualization tools that provide colorful, easy to understand feedback on how we’re doing, and how I’m doing.
- Let agents self-evaluate calls (using call recording and QM).
- Automate QA scoring with speech analytics (making it fairer and more balanced).
- Give agents direct access to a portal where they can see their schedules and request schedule changes.
- Use a Unified Agent Desktop to provide a “cockpit” that matches their tasks and workflow.
- Leverage Robotic Process Automation to provide agent assistance on routine tasks, guide them through complex tasks, and trigger follow up tasks.
- Speaking of bots... invest in chatbots or voice bots to help customers self-serve.
- Distribute scorecards appropriate to every level, including execs outside the center, that show how the center is doing and how it is contributing to the business goals.
- Use Instant Messaging and Collaboration tools for communication (not just email).
- Offer ongoing training modules, tied to development goals, delivered to the desktop at a scheduled time.
- Invest as much time and energy in Voice of the Employee surveys as the company does in Voice of the Customer surveys!

*Continued from page 3*

mitment to an agent’s development. And many of these tools can be enhanced with gamification, adding fun (and engaging) ways to work toward goals, compete, and celebrate success

We captured our “favorite engagers” **IN THE SIDEBAR**—technology that can have a real impact on how your agents feel about working in your center. You may find some ideas that resonate for your center.

**Pursue Engagement Enablement**

In the Tech Corner spirit of action, I’ve outlined two different assignments for you to assess your technology and how it helps—or hinders—agent engagement. The first helps you assess and plan by considering how technology impacts various elements of engagement reflected in an employee survey. Even if you don’t have a survey, you can find samples online and gauge how you’re doing. If you prefer to just assess your technology directly, use **ASSIGNMENT 2**. Look at each bucket of technology or break it down into more detail if you like.

The intent with either exercise is to honestly assess if technology is helping or hurting and get you to think about what can change. You may even want to ask a team of agents to do an assessment for you! I’m willing to bet you’ll find ways that technology improvements can drive a bump in engagement and that will undoubtedly ripple into other benefits in revenue, cost, and customer experience. 🎯



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