



HR & Marketing Collaboration **Leveraging Marketing To Drive Employee** **Engagement & Retention**

Optimizing HR's Relationship with Employees Through
Marketing Fundamentals

HR teams are painfully aware of the challenges in employee recruitment, retention and engagement as well as the mounting human capital costs and inefficiencies facing their organization. Innovative HR professionals are collaborating with their marketing counterparts and leveraging marketing strategies and best practices for engaging their most important audiences – their current and prospective employees.

Struggles with employee engagement, talent acquisition and retention are impacting companies from top to bottom. Five out of 10 employees report being disengaged at work and 13% report being actively disengaged which means they're not only dissatisfied with their job, but they're spreading negativity to coworkers.¹ Meanwhile, as employers attempt to remedy this downward spiral by simply replacing disengaged staff, they're spending as much as 200% of an employee's annual salary managing the turnover cycle.²

Reversing these negative trends isn't a straightforward task for companies, nor for the HR experts responsible for implementing employee engagement and retention initiatives. Stop-gap tactics like increasing hiring efforts or raising salaries are too surface-level to have a long-term impact on disengagement and turnover; especially, as the candidate pool continues to shrink.



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What's HR Up Against?

We're in the eye of a perfect storm for HR professionals. After nearly two years of watching droves of employees leave amidst the "Great Resignation", as many as half of today's HR departments are understaffed, burned out, or both. Combine that with a historically low unemployment rate and HR is often scrambling to find the bandwidth to engage and retain existing employees, while effectively managing the talent acquisition and onboarding process.

Employee values are changing as well which is further fueling the Big Quit. Motivated by better benefits, bigger salaries and a need to feel more fulfilled in their work, over 50% of the labor force is looking to make a change in jobs within the next 12 months. Intangible benefits such as flexible work schedules, a hybrid work environment and mental health support will top the list for jobseekers of all generations. Millennials, specifically, who will make up three-quarters of the global workforce by 2025,³ are actively seeking a workplace culture that offers intrinsic benefits like quality of life or work-life balance, career advancement potential, and the opportunity to participate in charitable initiatives.

¹ [Surprising, Disturbing Facts from the Mother of All Employee Engagemen Surveys – Forbes](#)

² [Retaining Talent – A Guide to Analyzing and Managing Employee Turnover – SHRM](#)

³ [The Future of Work: How Millennials are Changing the Workplace – Forbes](#)

HR Can't Do It Alone

With HR teams overworked, budgets stretched thin and the workforce evolving, companies are challenged to find holistic, cost-effective ways of fighting employee disengagement and turnover. To do this, companies can't focus solely on what they're lacking in terms of personnel or budget. Instead, employers should seek ways to optimize in-house expertise through collaboration to approach employee engagement and retention at a deeper level, starting with how they relate to and connect with their workforce.

Many organizations may feel they're already taking enough HR measures to strengthen their connection with employees. Blanket tools like total compensation statements, automated emails and efforts like company retreats might convince executives and decision-makers that they're "checking the box" when it comes to building an engaged workforce. But the truth is, all those status quo practices do is check the box. It's no longer enough for companies to communicate an employee's value in a one-size-fits-all manner. Today's employees are looking for something more – communication that's more personal and more relevant to what actually drives them to go to work each day.

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While HR experts have the specialized knowledge and experience to strategize and implement effective engagement campaigns, they may lack the bandwidth and resources to deploy these campaigns in the most targeted, impactful way on their own. Luckily, experts in strategic content deployment and audience-centric messaging development are “right across the hall” in the marketing department.

As different as their roles may seem, HR specialists have much in common with their marketing colleagues. Instead of strategizing campaigns and deploying outreach tactics to engage potential buyers, HR teams are looking to engage potential and current employees. Achieving both outcomes requires an understanding of the personal, emotional, and psychological variables that may be influencing their audiences' behaviors. Forwardthinking HR teams are working with marketers to develop empathetic, audience-centric strategies for employee communication in order to better align recruiting, engagement and retention tactics with the needs, goals and values of their employee and candidate bases.

Where Does the HR/ Marketing Collaboration Start?




Understanding Employee Audiences

For both marketers and HR experts, understanding the ever-changing motivations and drivers of their audiences should be the foundation of any engagement campaign. Human emotions, perspectives and mindsets aren't stagnant. Individuals are constantly cycling through elements and variables in life that influence their points of view. Internal factors like age and cultural background have a major impact on behaviors and mindsets, as do external factors like where someone lives or who they spend time with.

To develop effective and lasting engagement and retention strategies, it's essential for HR teams to find ways to zero in on the needs, concerns, and motivators of their employees, especially as the workforce becomes younger, more diverse, and employee values become less extrinsic. As HR leaders gain more insight into their personnel, they can also start to define audiences based on common values and concerns. A 30-year C-level executive likely has different professional and personal concerns and motivators than an entry-level team member. The type of content they receive – and how they receive it – should reflect those differences. The more defined the audiences, the more personalized experiences can be delivered to employees. HR can work with Marketing to gain practical, empathetic insights for developing an audience-based engagement strategy. Taking the time to evaluate audience trends and ask the right questions may help HR teams identify segments of their employee base they didn't know they had while giving them the inspiration to create more impactful content, messaging and engagement campaigns.



Marketing Tips For Employee Analysis

-  **Define employee groups by their values and concerns**
-  **Align content with these specific audience groups**
-  **Measure engagement with different types of content and adjust segments as necessary**

Developing Employee Messaging





Employee values and benefits shouldn't be developed at the company's whim. They should be guided by the employees. Total rewards statements and benefit packages aren't going to be a source of engagement if the content doesn't interest employees. HR departments should shape their total rewards programs and communication initiatives around their employee base, deploying content that is relevant and valuable to workers. Common marketing tactics and tools offer more purposeful ways of doing so.

In the same way that batch-and-blast emails often fail to deliver significant engagement results for marketers, impersonal and infrequent communication to employees is often equally fruitless. Tactics like surveys and behavior-based segmentation can give HR specialists the visibility necessary to tailor-fit content and messaging to various employee audiences.

Survey data provides direct insight into points of view, like whether or not an employee found an event beneficial or if they're having trouble interacting with their colleagues. Collecting behavior-based usage data enables HR teams to identify and target staff members with tailored content driven by actions like signing into the benefits portal or viewing a particular page of a total compensation statement. More general strategies like deploying campaigns specific to employee groups, departments and teams are also ways HR can make its employee outreach and communication as personalized and applicable as possible.

In the remote-first workforce of today, frequent, relatable communication is a key strategy. A large portion of employees – 90%, in fact – report needing weekly communication from leadership to build trust and feel motivated. The more targeted HR can be with its employee engagement strategies, the more data and feedback they can collect from their workforce.

Marketing Tips For Developing Employee-Centric Messaging

-  Gather voluntary employee insights through surveys and forms
-  Gather behavior-data based on actions like downloads and page views
-  Segment employee database by group, team and department
-  Develop tailored content based on employee feedback and intel

With a strong understanding of their audience and by leveraging the right tactics and tools, HR can deploy relevant content that contributes to workplace engagement and retention rather than just being another email in an employee's inbox.

Engaging Employees Wherever They are in the Life Cycle

Just as every marketing lead isn't a mouse click away from buying, not every employee is a bad day away from leaving their company. Each employee has a life cycle with their employer and each employee's investment in their position lies on a continuum. The key to retention — just like nurturing leads from being vaguely aware of a product or solution to a sale — is keeping employees in a development phase. It takes work, but companies with engaged employees are 21% more profitable.

Many HR specialists may lack the right tools and bandwidth to identify and prioritize where employees are in their journey with the company and deploying relevant content may be a challenge. To overcome this challenge on the marketing side, marketers often evaluate patterns in their leads' behavior. By gathering data from actions like page views, content downloads and form submissions, marketers get insights that help them prioritize which leads are the highest value and how they should engage them. Similarly, HR specialists can track an employee's usage and interaction with internal communications to gauge what their engagement level is. An employee that fails to open multiple internal emails or rarely logs into their total rewards dashboard could show HR that a worker may be disengaged and require specific outreach.

Engagement and retention tactics will be ineffective if companies attempt to communicate with workers in a vacuum. In addition to being conscious of employees' unique values and motivators at work, HR teams also need to evaluate where employees are in their life cycle with the company. Together, HR and Marketing can develop content and outreach strategies that align with employee mindsets at each stage of the employee life cycle.

Employee Experience Lifecycle



The Social Workplace Employee Lifecycle - The Social Workplace

[5 How CEOs Can Support Employee Mental Health in a Crisis](#)

[6 Employees working from home are putting in longer hours than before the pandemic - CNN](#)

[7 8 Employee Engagement Statistics You Need to Know in 2022 \[INFOGRAPHIC\]](#)

[8 Using Internal Communications to Enhance Business Growth - Trade Press Services](#)

Marketing Tips for Engaging Employees Wherever They Are In The Life Cycle



Be Human: A mind-boggling 75% of employees feel socially isolated or lonely at work since the onset of the pandemic.⁵ Get to know your employees, practice empathy, and use positive reinforcement (recognition and rewards).



Pump the Brakes: Burnout is real. Respect personal boundaries and working hours. This is especially true for remote employees who, on average, are working an extra three hours a day and feel as though they always have to be on.⁶



Communicate: Employees want to hear from their employers — 90% want weekly communications, 29% want daily updates.⁷ Effective, consistent communication is tied directly to employee engagement: 1 in 3 employees report not trusting their company as a direct result of infrequent communications while 85% feel motivated when they hear from their organization.⁸



Let Talent Beget Talent: Consider an employee referral program. Engaged employees refer their friends and connections. This results in above average hires 88% of the time and decreases time to hire by 55%.⁹

Let the Marketing and HR Collaboration Begin

Organizations looking to grow and manage human capital effectively must adapt to the changing values and motivators of the workforce. Through collaboration and teamwork, HR and Marketing can lead the way by shaping employee engagement and retention tactics around a deep understanding of employee audiences, values and mindsets. In doing so, companies not only save time and resources that would be wasted managing a long, unpredictable turnover cycle, they also establish a more cohesive and cross-functional approach that permeates all areas of the business.





About TotalRewards Software

Since 1991, TotalRewards Software has been innovating the total compensation statement space. From tailored SaaS software solutions to strategic advisement on total rewards programs to hands on tactical services, TotalRewards is committed to enabling its clients to effectively develop and market total rewards to employees, new hires, candidates and executives.

To learn more about how you can communicate the true value of total rewards to your employee and candidate audiences, visit TotalRewardsSoftware.com.



About Access Marketing Company

Access Marketing Company is a full-service marketing agency specializing in an audience- and data-driven approach to helping B2B companies innovate and grow. Whether by designing complex marketing automation programs or deploying targeted content campaigns, AMC's team has the knowledge and experience to help companies achieve their goals on a variety of internal and external marketing fronts.

Visit AccessMarketingCompany.com for insights and strategies on how to market to your most important audience – your employees.