

Employee engagement in **manufacturing**

Making a difference for your people on the
front line



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Introduction

Thanks for downloading this eBook from WorkBuzz on employee engagement in the manufacturing industry. We know HR professionals in this sector have unique challenges – from how to engage a deskless workforce to a serious lack of properly skilled candidates – and we want to help.

We'll cover how to go about fixing these problems, how to effectively reach and engage your deskless employees, and a few ideas for how to improve employee engagement at your organisation.

We'll also hear from Premier Foods, one of the UK's largest food manufacturers and home to some of the nation's best loved brands, on how their partnership with WorkBuzz helps ensure every voice across the business is heard.

If you're interested in talking to us about how we can help make your employee engagement strategy better, don't hesitate to get in touch.

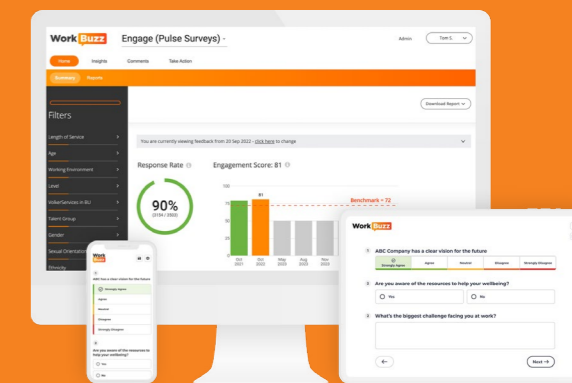


About WorkBuzz

The simple, flexible, customisable way to reach your Everyday Heroes.

Our employee engagement surveys give you regular, real-time feedback from all your people – wherever they are, and whatever they do.

Listen to your unsung heroes. Understand their concerns. Act on areas of improvement. Build a culture all your people can thrive in.



3 key people challenges in the manufacturing industry – and how to fix them



The manufacturing industry is known for its complex workforce challenges, which continue to evolve with technological advancements. Today, HR professionals in the manufacturing industry are facing a plethora of major challenges, some of which require timely solutions.

Here, we'll discuss key challenges confronting the manufacturing industry while providing insights into possible solutions. By understanding and mastering these issues, manufacturers can better prepare themselves for success in the future.

Attracting and retaining talent

One of the significant challenges that HR professionals face in the manufacturing industry is attracting and retaining talent. The manufacturing industry is no longer viewed as a vibrant and attractive industry and has lost considerable talent to more modern and diverse industries.

Recruiting and retaining the right people for your manufacturing workforce can be a challenge, but with the right strategies in place, it doesn't have to be:

- Develop an attractive recruitment process. It's important to have an efficient and effective recruitment process that is tailored to the needs of your organisation. In addition, make sure there are opportunities for people to apply in-person, as well as online.
- Leverage social media to attract potential candidates. Social media can be a powerful tool for recruiting and retaining the best talent. Utilise platforms such as LinkedIn to build relationships with potential candidates and promote job openings.
- Offer competitive compensation packages. Offering competitive pay is essential in order to attract and retain qualified individuals. Consider offering incentive-based compensation plans or bonuses to create an attractive package that will entice employees to stay with your organisation.

- Create a positive work environment. Implementing initiatives that will increase employee engagement and satisfaction can go a long way in creating a successful workforce. Consider introducing activities such as team building exercises or offering flexible work hours to foster camaraderie and boost morale.

Bridging the skills gap

Keeping up with the ever-changing demands of the manufacturing industry can be difficult, which is why it's important for HR professionals to stay on top of the issues and identify ways to bridge any potential skills gaps.

One way to do this is by conducting regular employee surveys, which can provide insight into the strengths and weaknesses of your workforce. Here are a few things to bear in mind:

- Keep it simple. The survey should be easy to understand and only ask questions that are relevant to the topics at hand.
- Make it anonymous. Employees should feel comfortable answering honestly, so

make sure they can do so without fear of reprisal or judgment.

- Ask for feedback. Ask open-ended questions that allow employees to provide their own unique insights and perspectives on certain issues.
- Analyse results. After the survey is completed, analyse the results carefully to look for any trends or patterns that might be useful in mitigating potential skills gaps.



Employee health and safety

The health and safety of employees should be a top priority for all manufacturers. However, the manufacturing industry presents inherent safety risks due to employees' involvement in working with machines, heavy equipment, and physical operations. HR professionals are, therefore, responsible for creating safer workplaces and developing safety protocols and policies that ensure employees' wellbeing.

- Provide adequate safety training. Employees should be trained on proper safety procedures and given refresher courses on a regular basis.
- Implement safety equipment. Make sure all workers are wearing the necessary protective gear and that equipment is regularly checked for any potential hazards.
- Monitor air quality levels. Install air-quality monitors in your facility to ensure hazardous materials are not being released into the atmosphere.
- Encourage employees to practice good hygiene. Establish a policy that encourages employees to wash their hands regularly and wear protective clothing when handling hazardous materials.



Why should you focus on employee engagement?

Employee engagement is a deep rational and emotional connection to your organisation and the work you do. It's the outcome of a great employee experience, and starts during the recruitment process – before you even turn up for your first day.

Engagement is important because it unlocks the potential of each individual, their motivation, and maximises their discretionary effort. If they're engaged enough to become advocates for your organisation, engagement can live on long after employees leave – which has a tangible impact on commercial outcomes for your business.



How to reach and engage deskless employees in the manufacturing industry



There are unique employee engagement challenges for the manufacturing industry, not least due to the large number of difficult-to-reach, deskless employees. Organisations in this sector must use innovative strategies to ensure their workforce is engaged, motivated, and productive.

The importance of listening to your employees

Employee surveys are a great way for organisations in the manufacturing industry to understand employee sentiment and motivation, as well as to identify employee engagement issues.

Surveys can be used to gain feedback on policies, job satisfaction, employee recognition programs, and much more. They can also provide invaluable insights into employee morale and engagement levels.

Organisations should strive to regularly run employee surveys to ensure they're staying ahead of employee engagement issues and providing a positive work environment.

Making employee engagement programmes more accessible to deskless workers







Having a great employee engagement programme is a waste of time if your employees can't take part. It's important to make employee surveys accessible for deskless employees in the manufacturing industry.

Many of these workers are unable to access employee engagement tools due to them being inaccessible or difficult to use on a smartphone or tablet – and many won't have access to a corporate email address.

To ensure employee engagement is successful, organisations should provide mobile-friendly resources and leverage platforms like WorkBuzz, which offers a 'kiosk' mode and unique entry code so employees can access surveys from their own device.

This approach should extend to your wider communication strategy. How do you better connect head office, leadership and the deskless workforce? You should consider:

What you need to know to better connect with a deskless workforce:

- 
Who your deskless employees are
 Build a picture using demographics, role descriptions and the challenges they face.
- 
Why you need to talk to them
 What information will you need to share?
- 
When you'll communicate
 Take into consideration different shift patterns and time zones.
- 
How you'll communicate
 Choosing the right channel is essential – specifically designed apps, internal communications tools (like Slack or SharePoint), kiosk stations, printed materials, bulletin boards, in-person conversations, texts and calls are all options.
- 
What you'll say
 Tailor the content with clear impact and outcomes for your deskless audience.
- 
Make it a two-way conversation
 Ensure your strategy includes methods for employee feedback, either through regular pulse surveys or on an ad-hoc basis.

Digital platforms like **WorkBuzz** can be powerful tools for improving employee engagement in the manufacturing industry. Organisations should look to leverage these platforms to listen to their employees, understand their needs, and act on their feedback.

5 ways to improve employee engagement in the manufacturing industry



Employee engagement is essential for any successful organisation, and the manufacturing industry is no different. It helps create a positive working environment and aligns employees' goals with those of the organisation.

Fortunately, there are several practical strategies that can be implemented by employers in the manufacturing industry to solve employee engagement challenges. From leveraging technology to introducing employee surveys, here are five ways to help increase employee motivation, satisfaction, and engagement.

1. Leverage technology to foster collaboration and communication

Leveraging technology is an important part of improving employee engagement in manufacturing organisations. Technology can be used to foster collaboration and communication between employees, helping them stay connected and engaged with their work – while also reducing costs associated with manual processes.

For example, HR professionals can use online tools such as video conferencing or instant

messaging to facilitate virtual meetings or discussions. Additionally, they can create digital workspaces where employees can share ideas and collaborate on projects in real-time. This will help strengthen relationships between team members and improve overall morale among workers.

Automated systems can also be used for tasks such as payroll processing or task tracking, so employees aren't burdened by tedious paperwork but instead have more time to focus on their jobs.

2. Create a positive working environment

Creating a positive working environment is essential for any successful organisation, especially in the manufacturing industry. HR professionals have an important role to play in this regard as they are responsible for setting expectations and creating an atmosphere that empowers employees to be engaged with their work.

This can be done by providing clear guidelines on job roles and responsibilities, offering rewards or recognition when goals are met, and ensuring there is open communication between employees and

management.

Organisations should strive for a workplace culture that values collaboration, creativity, innovation, and feedback from all levels of the organisation. Fostering these qualities within the workforce through activities such as team building events or group discussions will help build trust among workers which leads to higher employee engagement overall.

3. Align employees' goals with those of the organisation

Aligning employees' goals with those of the organisation is key to improving employee engagement. HR professionals can ensure this alignment by clearly communicating organisational objectives and expectations to all levels of the workforce.

This includes providing a clear understanding of job roles and responsibilities as well as setting measurable performance targets that are achievable yet challenging. Additionally, they should strive to create an environment where everyone feels valued and respected, so that employees feel motivated to contribute their best efforts towards

achieving organisational goals.

It's also important to provide feedback on a regular basis so that employees know how they are performing relative to their peers and can adjust accordingly if needed.

4. Measure employee engagement

Measuring employee engagement is a critical aspect of any successful organisation, and HR professionals have an important role to play in this regard. One of the most effective tools available to them is using surveys to gauge the satisfaction and engagement levels of employees.

The best surveys allow for anonymous responses, allowing employees to be honest without fear of repercussions. Additionally, surveys can provide HR professionals with valuable insights into how employees feel about their job roles and responsibilities as well as any potential areas for improvement which can then be addressed accordingly.

Data can also be collected from other sources such as performance reviews or feedback from managers in order to get a



How Premier Foods refreshed its view and focus to ensure every voice is listened to and valued

comprehensive understanding of employee engagement in the organisation.

5. Take action

Failing to act on feedback can have a negative impact on employee engagement, retention figures and overall customer experience. Employee surveys help deskless workers to be heard, but this should be more than just a box ticking exercise.

Surveys should be used as a means for gathering insights and data over time – and these insights should be aligned to your organisation’s KPIs, providing detail on key issues and highlighting opportunities for change and innovation.

Tailoring your surveys to your deskless workforce – as covered earlier in this eBook – means you’ll get better response rates and more actionable insights that can ensure fair and inclusive decisions for all your workforce, regardless of their schedules and locations.

Engaging your deskless workforce is essential if you want your manufacturing organisation to provide the best customer experiences.

To build better engagement, employee listening needs to be a constant activity within organisations, it helps leaders to identify what is – or isn’t – working, to respond to sources of disengagement, and to nurture a healthy culture.



Premier Foods is one of the UK’s largest food businesses. They employ over 4,000 dedicated colleagues operating from 15 sites across the country, supplying a range of retail, wholesale, foodservice, and other customers with their iconic brands which feature in millions of homes every day.

The problem

Premier Foods recently focused on a common challenge – a gender imbalance as you go up the hierarchy, with a lower representation of women in senior leadership roles. They decided to conduct a short survey in June 2020 to understand where women were underrepresented, why that may be, any barriers to progression, and what they could do to improve this. The survey focused on mid and senior management levels and invited all genders to share their views in order to understand commonalities for all genders or challenges unique to each.

The solution

WorkBuzz insights showed that there were shared challenges for employees around realising their career potential and the appetite to see more inclusive



leadership. It also highlighted a need for flexible working to better enable those with caring responsibilities and more support in returning to work after periods of leave.

Moreover, the survey identified clear differences between men and women at Premier Foods whereby the women felt less confident to speak out in front of senior management and challenge their thinking. This was compounded by the lack of representation in the senior leadership roles and an underlying feeling that females were less able to be their authentic self at work.

The outcome

After learning about the challenges and inviting people to share ideas on how to overcome them in follow-up focus groups conducted by external consultants, Premier Foods rolled out several initiatives:

- Hosting speakers to share learning about how to hold the room and offering Gravitas workshops
- Reverse mentoring scheme
- Reviews of policies and procedures for working parents
- Recruitment without bias working party
- Changing career conversations: training for line managers and creating I&D referees who are responsible for calling our behaviour that isn't inclusive
- Leveraging storytelling: #oktobeme stories shared across the organisation about bringing your authentic self to work
- Shifting ownership of I&D. Functions at Premier Foods are now driving I&D forward using diversity data, and learning more from their people about how they can further improve

These initiatives have been positively received at Premier Foods and have demonstrated the appetite for certain skills development – such as the gravitas workshops which were fully booked within 30 minutes of release. Premier Foods continues to listen and adapt its approach in line with the needs of employees.

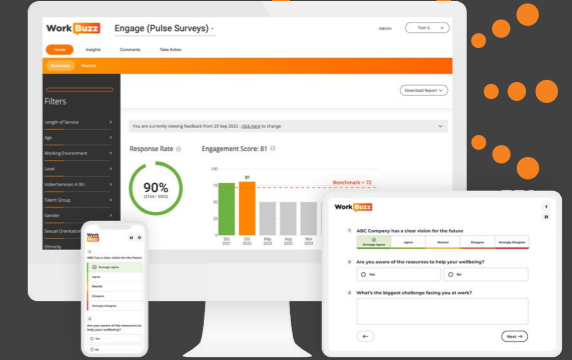
“We have been very pleased with WorkBuzz. The past 12 months have been massively challenging and the insights we have gained have helped to inform key business and people decisions. Most impressive is their service ethos, speed and adaptability.”

David Wilkinson
Human Resources Director, Premier Foods

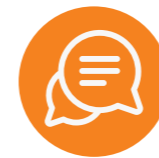


About WorkBuzz

Employee engagement surveys to reach Everyday Heroes in the manufacturing industry.



WorkBuzz helps you gather real-time feedback from your people, improve employee engagement and build a culture your team are proud to be part of – wherever they are, and whatever they do.



Listen to your employees at a frequency to suit your business – with annual surveys, pulse surveys and on-demand polls available as standard.



Understand key staff challenges around employee wellbeing, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, and employee retention. Use our best-practice question libraries or work with our team to create your own.



Act on feedback and implement positive change. Work with our team to understand what your data is telling you, and which actions you need to take. Benefit from an engaged, more productive workforce, and see an improvement in employee wellbeing, performance, and retention.

“Great service and easy to do business with. The WorkBuzz team are adaptive, attentive, professional and act as a true partner. Expertise within the team is also a big plus – providing useful insight into the wider world on what is/can impact on the employee experience.”

Ronnie Calderwood-Duncan, EDI Manager, Highways England

Give your Everyday Heroes a voice -
get started with a demo of the [WorkBuzz platform](https://www.workbuzz.com)