

# The do's and don'ts of recognizing employees throughout their careers

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“The rules of employee engagement have changed.”

Changes in technology, globalization and transparency have impacted the factors that drive employee intensity and commitment to an organization. At BI WORLDWIDE, we call these factors the New Rules of Engagement,<sup>SM</sup> which are based on four years of extensive research. These rules for leaders and managers focus on the aspects of work that make employees happy or unhappy and that are most powerful in driving performance. For example, the First Rule is **Get Inside Their Heads**, which encourages managers to understand the uniqueness of each of their employees and how they work best. The Seventh Rule, **Don't Kill the Meaning**, emphasizes the need employees have to be a part of something bigger than just a job and a paycheck – and it's up to the organization to deliver that. (See the full list of rules on page 4.)

How happy and engaged we are at work can vary. One day we might feel annoyed because of the behavior of a co-worker or boss; the next day we're amazed at how time flies because we're doing great work and having lots of fun. It can also shift based on where we are at in our careers.

Pulled from our research, here are the “voices” of engagement for employees at different tenure levels:

## Year One

*I think this gig just might work out but I'm looking hard as to whether I can trust leaders and to the degree they are fully transparent will tell me a lot about whether I have a future here. My pay is okay but wondering if it's fair for the work I perform. And regardless of the money I'm earning, I want to feel like I'm making a contribution for which I can feel part of something greater.*

**TAKE AWAY:** Newer associates want to have all (or most) of the facts and feel they are in the loop. The starting pay is probably okay but as they grow in their value to the organization, they'll be keeping tabs on whether that is reflected in their compensation. They are getting a glimpse of how what they do can make a difference—keep showing them that path.

## Year Three

*I feel like I'm really beginning to hit my stride at this place, which feels great. I may not always feel as appreciated for the good work I'm doing but coworkers who have been here a couple more years than me say that even more awesome things are in front of me.*



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## Year Three

*continued*

**TAKE AWAY:** New employees often get lots of attention but we may take employees at this tenure for granted. Don't do that – if they're doing good things, tell them. Remind them there are other opportunities ahead and give them a mentor with a bit more tenure who can help them plan for the future.

## Year Five

*Things are great! This place really suits me. I love my work and I know I have access to the information I need to do my job well. This work is cool! My contributions are appreciated and valued. It's great working for a manager that really gets me and helps bring out my best work.*

**TAKE AWAY:** Make sure their manager is really in tune with their goals and desires so they can take their performance even further. Help them see ways they can be innovative and creative. Consider their strengths (and weaknesses) as you give them projects to manage. If they feel understood, they'll be inspired to even further performance and commitment to the organization.

## Year Ten

*I can't believe it's been ten years, and there have been a few bumps, but the hard work is paying off. I can see the fruits of my labor and they are good. I'm grateful the organization has seen my hard work and has thanked me accordingly. What's helped me push through the hard work is my passion that what we're doing is making a difference for our organization and the people we serve.*

**TAKE AWAY:** Their career is really kicking into high speed and the accolades they receive do not go unnoticed. They may be looking to cement their legacy so continue to show them how their contributions are making a big difference to the overall success of the organization.

## Year Twenty

*As I look back on my career, I can't help but feel a tremendous sense of pride. It's been a great run and I'm ready to finish this out right. Having said that, I can't*

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## Year Twenty

*continued*

*help but wonder whether some of my efforts are being taken for granted these days, but appreciation for my continued good work still means something to me. And those good management practices like transparency and full engagement by my manager still count. I might be a bit "more mature" but good management engages employees of all generations!*

**TAKE AWAY:** *Don't forget those Boomers. They still have a lot to contribute and want to finish their career off in style. Keep them in the loop and they'll keep producing.*

Recognition is crucial at each of these career stages but the context will change based on tenure. Use these insights to do an even better job of recognizing and engaging employees as they reach these key career milestones.

To learn more about how BI WORLDWIDE can help you recognize employee service anniversaries at all tenure levels, visit: [BIWORLDWIDE.com](http://BIWORLDWIDE.com) or email [info@BIWORLDWIDE.com](mailto:info@BIWORLDWIDE.com).



# the NEW RULES of ENGAGEMENT\*

## 1. get inside their **heads**

More than ever, great managing is a matter of intense understanding of each unique individual, knowing their abilities, their aspirations, and how they work best.



## 2. make them **fearless**

No one can promise job security anymore. But that doesn't mean you can't make your people courageous, able to focus on the company's goal rather than self-preservation.



## 3. make **money** a non-issue

Money isn't everything. It only gets you so far. But companies that mishandle this emotional area will make it a bigger deal than it has to be.



## 4. help them **thrive**

Work conditions and policies can't help but affect people's health. Getting them right, and with the right intent, doesn't just reduce costs; it invigorates the employees and the business.



## 5. be **cool**

Talented people don't have to work for boring companies, and most won't. Loosening up and making a uniquely stimulating culture create a real competitive edge.



## 6. be **boldly** transparent

There are no more secrets; everything about a company is public, or will be. Behave accordingly.



## 7. don't kill the **meaning**

People need to be part of something bigger than just a job and a paycheck.



## 8. see their **future**

What people do today is largely motivated by where they think it will take them in the future. It's as true on the job as it was for every employee dreaming of a future career when he or she was in school. Companies that are deliberate about helping employees chart that future get those people's best work.



## 9. magnify their success

What a company does not recognize, it should not expect to see repeated. Making a big deal of employees' accomplishments ensures the victories will be multiplied.



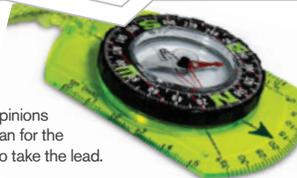
## 10. unite them

People have always been willing to take one for the right team, but players get traded much more these days. With people moving between companies at a faster pace than ever before, it's never been more important to create conditions that foster strong collaboration.



## 11. let them **lead**

Employees don't just want their opinions to count. To accomplish all they can for the company, they need the chance to take the lead.



## 12. take it to **extremes**

Your best people are itching to accomplish something incredible together. Challenge, rally, and support your people and you will be struck by what they can do.

