Gallup Q¹²® and Employee Engagement FAQs

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND THE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

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Gallup® Q¹²® and Employee Engagement FAQs

This guide provides answers to some of the most commonly asked questions about Gallup's Q¹² survey and developing an employee engagement strategy.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE Q¹² SURVEY AND METHODOLOGY

Question: Why care about employee engagement?

Answer: Organizations can measure the strength of their workplace.

The world's top-performing organizations understand that employee engagement is a force that drives business outcomes. Research shows that engaged employees are more productive employees. They are more profitable, more customer-focused, safer and more likely to withstand temptations to leave the organization. In the best organizations, employee engagement transcends a human resources initiative — it is the way they do business.

The best-performing companies know that developing an employee engagement strategy and linking it to achieving corporate goals will help them win in the marketplace.

Question: What does the term "engaged" mean? How do you describe an "engaged employee"?

Answer: An engaged employee is involved in and enthusiastic about his or her work. Engaged employees are 100% psychologically committed to their role. They are thrilled at the challenge of their work every day. They are in a role that uses their talents, they know the scope of their job, and they are always looking for new and different ways of achieving the outcomes of their role.

Question: Why are there only 12 items on the core Q¹² survey?

Answer: The purpose of the Q¹² survey is to measure the strength of an organization's culture, department by department, at the workgroup level. Organizations must hold their managers accountable on the front lines. Managers must take the Q¹² survey results as seriously as they do other performance criteria. If they do that, they understand that the Q¹² survey tool measures employee attitudes that link to important business outcomes and is comparable to benchmarks for other organizations and workgroups.

Question: Why does Gallup use the 12 items?

Answer: Originally, Gallup interviewed more than 1 million employees and asked hundreds of questions about countless aspects of the workplace. Using the initial data, Gallup determined which items best linked to workplace performance. More than 25 million employees have now answered these 12 items.

Gallup searched for patterns in the data: Which items were simply different ways of measuring the same factor? Which were the best items to measure each factor? Gallup researchers were not interested in items that yielded a unanimous "Yes, I strongly agree" or "No, I strongly disagree." Rather, researchers were searching for items to

which the most engaged employees — those who were loyal and productive — answered positively and everyone else — the average performers and the disengaged — answered neutrally or negatively.

From this research, Gallup discovered that 12 items can measure the strength of a workplace. These 12 items do not capture everything about the workplace, but they do capture the most information and the most important information. They measure the core elements needed to attract, focus and keep the most talented employees.

Gallup performs ongoing analysis to ensure that the 12 items continue to link to and predict important business outcomes such as productivity, customer ratings, shrinkage/theft, turnover, absenteeism, safety and quality.

Question: Is the goal of the Q¹² survey to improve overall workplace satisfaction?

Answer: No, the goal of the survey is to create a stronger workplace. Gallup's definition of a stronger workplace is a more productive workplace: one that is more profitable, experiences a lower turnover rate, and has fewer accidents, lower healthcare costs, fewer workers' compensation claims, better customer service, and so forth. Gallup selected the 12 items because of the empirical evidence that connects them to these outcomes.

Question: Is satisfaction the same thing as engagement?

Answer: No, traditional employee surveys are based on the premise that employees should be happy or content. Either satisfaction is the goal by itself or the organization simply assumes satisfied employees will create better business performance. The flaw in this logic is that employees are often "satisfied" for reasons contrary to the interests of the business. While engagement relates to satisfaction and loyalty, engagement also measures other unique information and directly connects to business outcomes such as retention, safety and productivity. A satisfied employee is not necessarily an engaged employee.

Question: How should I interpret the items?

Answer: Interpret each item in terms of what it means to you. What the item means to you depends on your role in your organization and what is important to you in your role.

Question: Whom or what am I rating when I answer this item? Am I rating my immediate supervisor, my department manager, my organization, etc.?

Answer: Think about your workplace environment, which is made up of many things. The greatest concern is whether your workplace needs are being met.

Question: What am I supposed to rate with this survey?

Answer: Rate your current work environment. Whether you have been with your organization or in your current role for two months or 10 years, you should rate your current work environment.

Question: Is the survey voluntary?

Answer: Yes, but completing the survey means that you are voicing your opinions and, as a result, you are actively participating in creating a great workplace.

Question: What if I changed jobs during this past year? Which job should I reference when I take the survey?

Answer: Your answers should reflect the position you are in at the time of the survey.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF Q¹² SURVEY RESULTS

Question: Who sees my responses?

Answer: Independently of your organization, Gallup administers the entire survey. Your organization only receives the aggregated results. Gallup includes individual results with other respondents' data it receives and reports these results at the work-unit, business-unit and companywide levels. Gallup uses specific rules to ensure confidentiality of individual responses. No member of your organization has access to data that identify specific employee responses.

Question: Can my organization identify me from my responses?

Answer: No. The reports contain engagement results for the group only. To protect each person's confidentiality, Gallup does not generate reports for groups that did not have enough people answer the survey items.

Question: Can my organization see my answers?

Answer: No. The only information that your organization receives is a collective breakdown of a business unit's results. No reports contain information about individuals or ways for a manager to determine individual responses.

Question: Why do I need an access code to participate in the survey?

Answer: All survey participants receive a randomly generated unique access code. Gallup creates and distributes the access codes. No one in the organization knows anyone else's access code. This ensures confidentiality of responses. The access code also ensures that each employee can take the survey only once (not multiple times) and that Gallup knows how to aggregate the data for each workgroup in the organization.