

Employee Engagement at IMSA

How is employee engagement measured?

At IMSA, we measure employee engagement using the Q12 from Gallup, which is a series of 12 questions:

- Q1: I know what is expected of me at work.
- Q2: I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.
- Q3: At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
- Q4: In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.
- Q5: My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.
- Q6: There is someone at work who encourages my development.
- Q7: At work, my opinions seem to count.
- Q8: The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.
- Q9: My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.
- Q10: I have a best friend at work.
- Q11: In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.
- Q12: This last year, I have had opportunities to learn and grow.

Why do we measure employee engagement using the Gallup Q12?

Gallup's Q12 is research based.

- They surveyed 1 million employees asking hundreds of questions in a variety of ways and determine the Q12 gave the most accurate depiction of engagement
 - They continuously perform ongoing research to ensure their Q12 does not become outdated.

Gallup gives your organization a score for each question, but more importantly, it norms your organization against others, to show how your organization compares to similar organizations.

- So one year, your score might go up, but don't celebrate just yet, as engagement might actually be worse when compared to similar organizations.

If the Q12 is simply an assessment tool, what can I actually do to improve engagement?

The simplest way to improve engagement, is to think about what actions you can take to improve your employee's answers to a particular question.

- For example, if you throw your employee's a pizza party, will that improve engagement?
 - No, because that action does not relate back to one of the 12 questions.
- Instead, pick a Q12 question, and think what could you do that may influence your employees to answer more positively for that question.
 - For example, if you want to improve "This last year, I have had opportunities to learn and grow," you might want to encourage your employee to attend professional development workshops, discuss their growth in every 1 on 1 meeting, and/or readjust their work responsibilities so they have time for professional growth.

Breaking down the Q12

The next slides break down how you can improve each score of each Q12 question.

- If you don't want to read all that, here's a brief summary of what it all essentially comes down to:
 - Actively listen to your employees
 - Trust your employees
 - Work as a team, not as a Superior/Subordinate relationship

Q1: I know what is expected of me at work.

To improve this score, you might:

- Set clear expectations for the employee
- Be decisive in your decision-making and avoid waffling/changing your mind frequently
- Give ongoing feedback to the employee, so they know how they are performing
- Work with your employee to establish clear goals and objectives they can work towards
- Give a clear vision of what excellence looks like in the employee's role

Q2: I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.

To improve this score, you might:

- Ask the employee what materials and equipment they need to be effective
 - Follow up by getting them those materials and equipment and if you can't, an excuse explaining why you can't, is not going to see this score improve, you'll just have to live with this score being stagnant.
- Be mindful that materials and equipment can include: furniture, space, time, technology (hardware and software), and various other equipment or working materials
- Continuously evaluate if processes are working efficiently by listening to and being receptive to employee feedback

Q3: At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.

To improve this score, you might:

- Ask your employee what would make them feel like they are doing their best every day.
- Converse with your employee to determine how their workload can match what makes them feel at their best.
- Also determine what obstacles prevent them from feeling their best and work with the employee to remove those obstacles

Q4: In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.

To improve this score, you might:

- Recognize your employee's good work every 7 days
- Ask your employee how they like to be recognized. You may be recognizing them, but not in the way they like, so they don't feel recognized
- Be specific in the recognition you give. You're doing great is relatively meaningless, whereas, great job communicating your vision in that meeting yesterday, shows the employee that you're paying attention and noticing when they doing something specifically great.
- Realize that recognition \neq appreciation. A pizza party for your whole team is appreciation, not recognition. Recognition needs to be specific and in the format that your employee enjoys.

Q5: My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.

To improve this score, you might:

- Build a genuine relationship with the employee. You will not improve this score if you come across as fake, insincere, or ingenuine.
 - Honestly, if you need it explained how to build a genuine relationship, I don't think you're going to succeed at it.
- Ensure your employees are setting up healthy work/life boundaries, such as being truly OFF during PTO, encouraging using sick time when they don't feel well, not responding to work emails outside of work hours, etc.
- Regularly check-in with employee about their workload and how they are doing.
 - Do this in an individual 1 on 1 setting, not as a team.

Q6: There is someone at work who encourages my development.

To improve this score, you might:

- Meet regularly with your employee and actively listen to what they need to develop
- Set up a “community of learning,” where peers can meet and share best practices with each other
- Set up a peer coaching program where peers are assigned a mentor who coaches them for a six month period

Q7: At work, my opinions seem to count.

To improve this score, you might:

- Engage with your employees before making decisions that impact their work, so you can have a well-rounded perspective
- Share information with your employees in a timely manner when it's related to their work.
- Take recommendations from employees when they provide evidence to back that recommendation.
 - Provide feedback as to why a recommendation wasn't used including the evidence that contradicted their recommendation
- Engage with your employees as if they are thought partners with a common goal and not subordinates who need to blindly follow
- Focus on outcomes, rather than how we get there. You don't need to control every aspect of a process, you just need the desired outcome to be true.
- Welcome the expertise of your employees and don't feel threatened if they correct you or know more than you on a certain subject.

Q8: The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.

To improve this score, you might:

- Ensure your employee understands what the mission of IMSA is
- Ask them how they feel their work contributes to the mission and open a dialogue if they struggle to make the connection between their work and the mission
- Talk to them about what would make them feel their work is important and try to align more work responsibilities to that feeling

Q9. My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.

To improve this score, you might:

- Set high expectations for all employees on your team
- Improve communication between team members so they are aware of each other's accomplishments
- Create a system where employee's can praise each other's work and share those communications with all team members
- Hold employees who are not completing their fair share accountable

Q10. I have a best friend at work.

To improve this score, you might:

- Create more opportunities for team building
- Create more opportunities for employees to socialize during the work day in informal ways
- Create a work environment built on trust
- Address employees grievances with each other directly so they don't fester

Q11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.

To improve this score, you might:

- Regularly give direct, timely, and relevant feedback to your employees
- Set up systems to ensure you are providing that feedback
- Create short and long term goals with employees
- Learn about your employee's aspirations and with their input, determine how those aspirations might align with work that needs to get done or professional development that can be done.
- Debrief with employees after they attend professional development opportunities

Q12. This last year, I have had opportunities to learn and grow.

To improve this score, you might:

- Take the information you learned when you talked to the employee about their aspirations, and give them opportunities that align with those aspirations
- Set aside a budget that employees can utilize to attend professional development opportunities that interest them
- Set aside time throughout the year where the employee can attend professional development opportunities or work on projects that will allow them to stretch themselves

References

<https://www.monkhouseandcompany.com/guides-resources/why-the-gallup-q12-is-the-best-to-ol-for-growth/>

<https://www.surveylab.com/blog/gallup-q12/>

Gallup Q12[®] and Employee Engagement FAQs

<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/gallup-questions-descriptions>