

Remote employee engagement: the number one goal for companies who have shifted to a remote-first workforce. When employees spent most of their time in the office, employee engagement was a more straightforward goal for many companies.

In 2019, remote work was still a perk given by many companies to their employees. Some companies were experimenting with working remotely, thinking of a remote work environment as a future possibility. But today, possibly by necessity, many companies are working to develop the right procedures, methods, and norms of their newly remote workforce.

In addition to the challenges of remote work at the local level, many companies have expanded their operations globally and must develop global communications methods that promote employee engagement.

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What are the challenges of remote employee engagement and communication?

Although emphasizing remote employee engagement and communications might seem like a recent focus for companies, the term “employee engagement” was [first used](#) in an academic journal in 1990. It’s not a secret for companies that employee engagement can significantly drive up [productivity](#) and the [wellness](#) of their employees. And this doesn’t change in a remote setting.

In what business settings does remote employee engagement play a major role, and where do companies run into challenges?

International expansion: Technology has allowed companies worldwide to pursue local and global growth at the same time. However, it has also led to the realization that many of us are not always prepared to deal with communication challenges across different cultures.

Kyle Hegarty, author and cross-cultural expert, believes that one of the main challenges for employee engagement today is “that companies have gone global, but people have not.”

WATCH: Webinar - [“How to Stay On Top of the Evolving Challenges of Driving Effective Employee Engagement”](#)

Adapting to technology: Yes, trying to make the case that technology is a challenge might be a challenge in and of itself. However, the reality is that not everybody relates to technology in the same way or can learn about technology at the same speed.

There are different types of personalities, age groups, and work styles that often impact how comfortable people are with communicating remotely within each company.

Hiring and onboarding: We all know that first impressions play a big part in human relations. Employees who don't have the best selection and/or onboarding experience will have difficulty developing engagement within their team and the larger company.

Remote communications make selection and onboarding processes even more complicated, making it especially critical for companies to focus on communication and integration strategies.

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Building trust: If you want to generate engagement in your employees, building trust is vital. However, this may become a challenge while working remotely, as employees have less contact with their managers and peers.

Recognizing employees: Now that employees are just a face on a computer screen, it's hard for them to feel like they are seen and understood as individuals.

How do communication styles impact employee engagement?

Almost everybody has worked for a company where the chemistry isn't there. It's not necessarily because the company is terrible, but teams have trouble communicating effectively.

Before employee engagement was in the spotlight, companies didn't take into consideration the fact that each employee would have a different reaction to communication styles.

Not every employee is comfortable with a direct style of communication. According to Hagerty, in countries like the U.S., they have a direct communication style where people say what they mean and mean what they say. In contrast, in regions like Latin America and Asia, people favor a more indirect communication style.

The mistake most companies make is using their local communication styles when addressing everybody. Similarly, when companies send employees to other countries, they often make the mistake of choosing the employees who they believe to be right for the job, without considering who is best suited to do business with different cultures.

How can you adapt your communication styles to drive employee engagement?

There are a few areas where you and your company can improve communication styles to increase employee engagement.

Emphasize your mission

You know the purpose of your company and work towards it every day, but do your employees? Just because they are getting the work done doesn't mean that they know the company's mission. Communicating your mission clearly can make all the difference in motivating your employees.

Once everyone in your company knows where they are headed, there will be significantly more engagement from employees.

Treat employee engagement as a business issue

A mistake that many companies make is treating employee engagement as a human resources issue. Employee engagement is wholly related to your bottom line and your team's overall performance.

Provide feedback the way your team wants to receive it

As previously mentioned, not everyone is comfortable with direct communication. It's essential to learn how to communicate in all situations and to provide feedback according to each culture or employee's work style.

Look at your employees

This does not just mean in the literal sense, but in a way that allows you to get to know your employees and make them feel seen. The more they feel that they are an integral part of your team, the better they will perform.

Enhance the onboarding experience

Is there a better time to emphasize good communication than when you are welcoming new employees? According to the [Society for Human Resource Management \(SHRM\)](#), organizations with poor onboarding processes are only setting up employees for an early exit.

Amy Hirsh Robinson, principal of consulting firm The Interchange Group in Los Angeles, tells SHRM, "Onboarding is a magic moment when new employees decide to stay engaged or become disengaged." While this may be challenging in a remote environment, it is even

more critical without any in-person interaction to supplement.



How can you improve employee engagement through the onboarding experience?

As we've established, if you want to drive employee engagement from the get-go, you need to provide employees with the best onboarding experience. How do you achieve this when you want to hire in another country where you don't know the lay of the land, culture, language, or the overall social dynamics?

Today, different hiring models give you access to local experts to help your employees have the best onboarding experience. Among these models, the Employer of Record (EOR) stands out as a viable option for companies that want to hire international employees without setting up a global entity.

Companies can hire global employees through an EOR, which serves as the legal employer and handles payroll, taxes, benefits, and HR functions. The EOR has an entity already in place, with local experts that can help your company understand a new market's nuances and complexity.

Additionally, an EOR takes on 100 percent of the risk related to compliance and the

responsibility to follow and stay updated with local rules and regulations.

How can an EOR and other models can help you with communication and employee engagement?

While the EOR takes on the everyday logistics like payroll, benefits administration, and HR support, your internal team can focus on the training and integration necessary to get your new team member up and running faster.

A significant advantage of working with an EOR is that it allows you to focus on your company without dealing with the complexities of international payroll and benefits.

Want to learn more? Download our quick guide, [“What Is an Employer of Record?”](#)