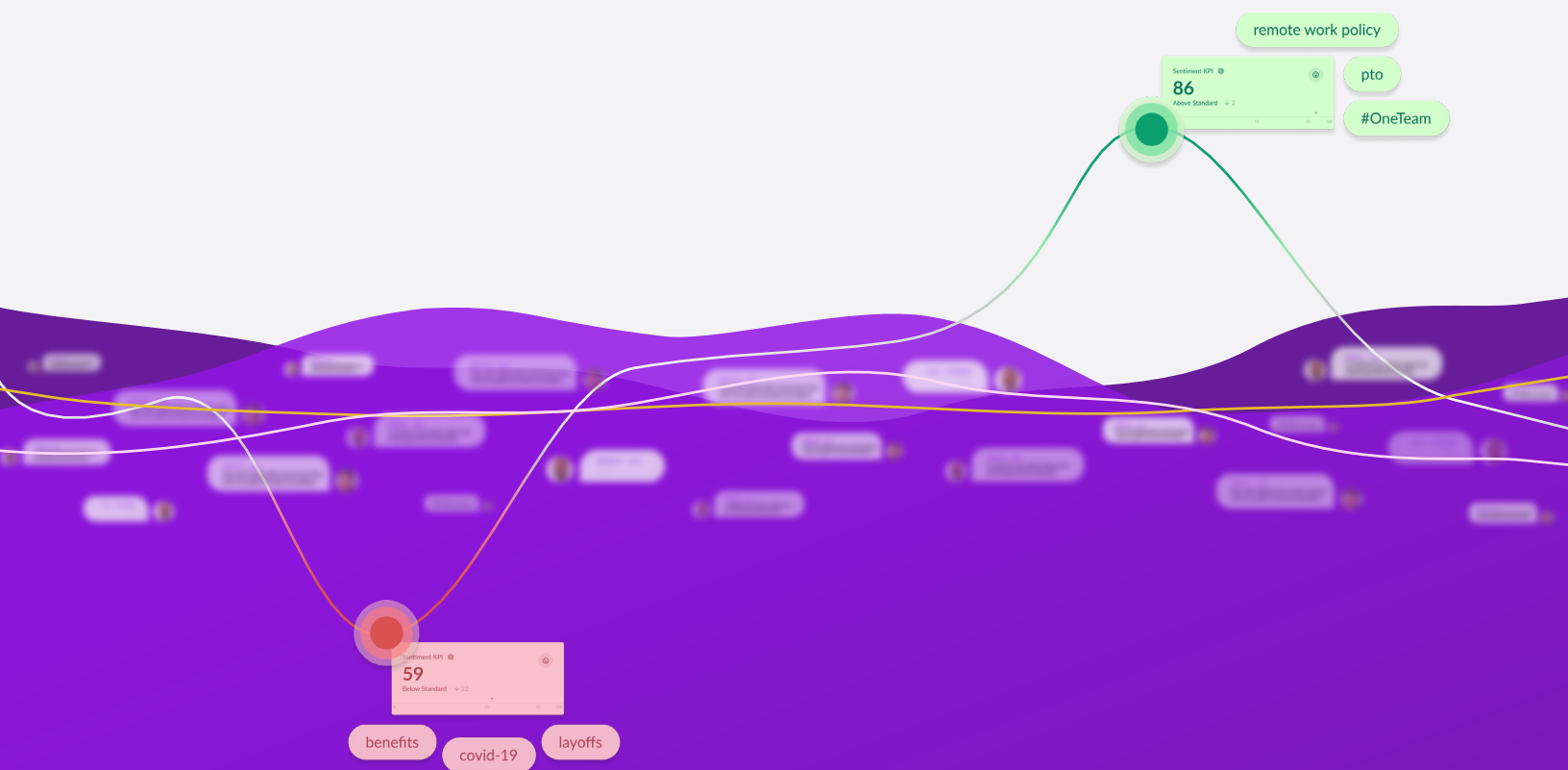


5

5 Tips for Enhancing Employee Engagement

THROUGH CONTINUOUS LISTENING



Aware

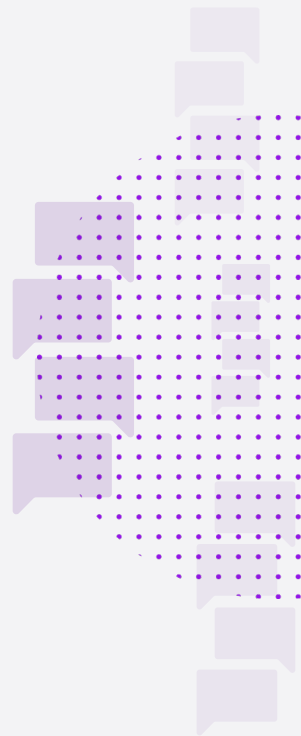
Workforce sentiment, employee wellbeing, organizational commitment ... whatever you call it, employee engagement isn't a new concept. In fact, enterprise leaders generally acknowledge the relationship between employee engagement and company profitability. If organizations commonly accept the benefits, why does the conversation around employee engagement suddenly feel like a hot topic?

According to Gallup, highly engaged teams result in fewer negative outcomes, more positive outcomes and greater overall organizational success.

Quite simply, most companies aren't prepared to support their people professionally or personally in a remote-work-first environment. Organizations with historically engaged employees in a traditional workplace must develop new, digital strategies for maintaining commitment, while those that were coping with an actively disengaged workforce face an even steeper uphill battle of connecting their dispersed employees.

To add to the pressure, recent studies show [a significant increase in anxiety and social isolation](#) of remote workers in the past several months. This leaves companies scrambling to provide employees appropriate support, while also struggling to reinforce or re-establish culture.

A study published in [Human Performance](#) found that highly engaged teams were more resilient than their peers during downturns. By emphasizing an empathetic and connected culture, leaders can help strengthen teams and individuals as they face uncertainty during this time of widespread remote work, social uncertainty and the global health crisis.





Listen Intentionally to Your Employees

Historically, large enterprises relied on annual surveys to better understand employee engagement and disposition. However, the results of annual surveys don't come quickly enough to take meaningful action and, in reality, only reflect how employees felt during a single point in time.

Gartner analysts report that, by 2023,

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of enterprises with more than 2,500 employees will augment annual engagement surveys with pulse surveys.

Some forward-thinking, more innovative companies now embrace [continuous listening strategies](#) for more actionable insights. Gartner analysts report that, by 2023, 80% of enterprises with more than 2,500 employees will augment annual engagement surveys with pulse surveys or indirect methods to gauge worker sentiment.

If designed and executed well, a continuous listening program could transform an organization's culture and increase employee engagement.

What is a Continuous Listening Program?

A continuous listening program is an organized effort to gather and respond to feedback across the employee lifecycle. This can take many forms including surveys, focus groups or an integrated insights solution that analyze digital communication data.

While no strategy is one-size-fits-all in the enterprise world, organizations should pay careful attention to these **five tips for enhancing employee engagement**—particularly in a remote-work-first world.



TIP NUMBER ONE

Know What Your Employees Care About

This tip may seem like a no-brainer, yet many organizations can't accurately articulate what employees care about most. Understanding the Voice of the Employee is key to driving deeper engagement in the workplace.

Again, some companies rely on pulse surveys or focus groups to gather data on this topic. However, these methods can produce flawed results due to inherent response biases or uncertainty regarding anonymity.

As you look to employ deeper listening efforts to understand the Voice of the Employee, the solution is likely right at your fingertips. Many organizations now lean heavily on digital communication tools to connect a dispersed workforce. Tools like Slack, Microsoft Teams, Workplace from Facebook and Yammer allow employees to collaborate on work as well as provide a 'digital water cooler' to build personal and professional relationships with colleagues.

Look no further than the inherently chatty conversations on these platforms to truly understand what's top-of-mind with employees. Simply read the posts, comments and other conversations happening in your organization's communication platform to get a pulse on the important topics that employees aren't telling you on surveys and in focus groups. Take it a step further, [as Farmers Insurance did](#), and respond on the platform in real-time with answers or a course of action.



KENNY G. 12:43PM

I can't believe this is the PTO policy we have! My child has COVID and I can't take time off to care for her without risking my job. Unbelievable!

SANDRA D. 12:43PM

HR

Hey Kenny, we are actually in the process of updating our PTO, Benefits and Pay structure. More updates to come soon!



TIP NUMBER TWO

Support and Encourage Healthy, Open Discussion

Any remaining line between personal and professional lives went out the window with the sudden quarantine and unexpected switch to remote work. Parents struggle to balance working from home alongside remote learning, while others face their own isolation and anxieties.

Employees need a space to talk about their experiences, their struggles and even their thoughts on current social issues that so often permeate their lives. By creating a space that is **psychologically safe**—that is, a space where individuals feel comfortable speaking up—organizations can further establish trust with employees.



Leverage existing communications platforms to designate channels or groups for employees to share and discuss the issues they care about. Many organizations create Slack channels or Yammer communities specifically to discuss topics that might not relate directly to work, such as a Working Parents channel or a BIPOC community.

Protect your culture of diversity and inclusion when you establish guidelines regarding professionalism, respect, and appropriate versus inappropriate discourse. This ensures all employees feel comfortable sharing without fear of attack or retribution. If employee actions don't align with these guidelines, make sure to hold these individuals accountable.

Designate culture champions to tackle issues in specific areas of the communications platform with high-touch community moderation and support managers in appropriately coaching employees who stray from keeping conversations healthy—whether intentional or not.

Encouraging candor and acceptance of differing opinions helps employees feel heard and acknowledged, which deepens engagement. Set a precedent for honest, raw conversations by urging leaders to openly share and communicate in these safe spaces—starting at the executive level.

- **Create a safe place for discussion**
- **Establish and enforce guidelines**
- **Designate culture champions**
- **Encourage and model candor and respect**

TIP NUMBER THREE

Understand When, Where and Why Employee Engagement Shifts

A well-executed continuous listening strategy surfaces shifts in employee engagement as they happen. This allows leaders to issue a timely response. However, leaders need to also fully understand the root cause of behavior change in order to choose the most effective action.

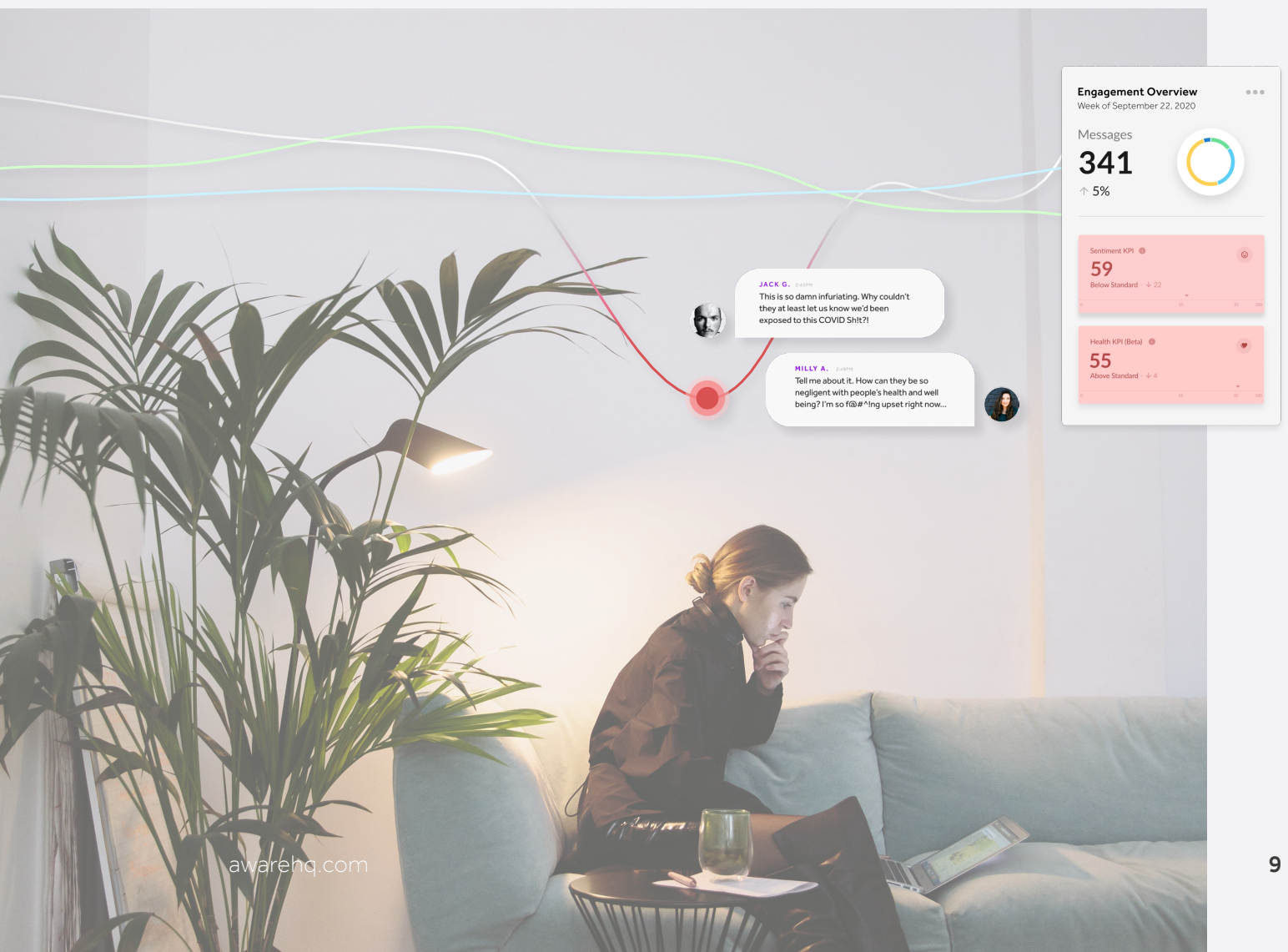
Sometimes internal or external events align with decreased employee sentiment and leaders attempt to infer causation. This puts the organization in the position of relying on gut or intuition, which may or may not prove accurate. Before jumping to conclusions, leverage the same social listening strategies you would use externally to listen to customers, but apply them internally to better understand employees.

By analyzing employee conversations on existing communication channels, companies can identify common themes or validate intuition—without relying on employees to accurately articulate feelings in a focus group or pulse survey.

To take the analysis even further look at where the common themes are most often discussed. Do these conversations occur in a particular Slack channel? Is one department more vocal about a concern? Are conversations around a specific issue isolated or more widespread?

Lastly, look deeply at these conversations and associated comments. Do employees maintain a level of integrity and respect? Or do comments contain toxicity or language inappropriate for the workplace?

Negative conversations don't necessarily indicate declining employee engagement or reputational risks. However, employees who use disparaging language to disagree, or those who choose not to participate in discussions at all, could indicate **active disengagement**.



TIP NUMBER FOUR

Help Executives Understand Deeper Issues

Research shows that a toxic employee has a **30% impact on the productivity** of the 20 employees closest to them. Organizations can't afford to ignore toxic behaviors, yet so often these situations go unreported or unnoticed. Take Tip #3 and flip it on its head by listening for digital conversations that might indicate a shift in employee engagement is forthcoming.

Look for microaggressions or passive aggressive comments that could lead to greater conflict. Track trends in conversation behavior in order to identify if and when behaviors change. Create a process for escalating potential toxic behaviors to HR and macro trends to the executive level. These measures ensure toxic behaviors are addressed swiftly and appropriately.

Track trends in conversation behavior to identify notable changes.

Don't just share negative events with your leadership team, build a process to communicate organizational insights. Shifts in sentiment and trends across your company or in specific pockets (departments, teams) can provide valuable insights into which employee initiatives to prioritize.



NEIL H. 10:45 AM

How excited are you to start this new project? It's going to be great to finally collaborate with the other teams.

ROXY W. 10:45 AM

Yeah.. wooh. Sooo excited to spend more time with them and give more of my time away to something this redundant...
#sarcasm



TIP NUMBER FIVE

Use Employee Response to Adjust Communications

Organizations can implement continuous listening strategies, conduct deep social listening and analyze conversations to no end, but these efforts only deepen employee engagement if leaders respond to the insights they receive.

Gather the Voice of the Employee, identify shifts in sentiment, encourage healthy discussion and understand areas of opportunity, then work with executives to devise a laser-focused, strategic plan to address and respond to these learnings.

As leaders execute the plan, use real-time communication platforms like Slack, Yammer and Microsoft Teams to share information—and to learn what resonates with employees. By watching reactions and reading comments related to corporate initiatives or announcements, internal communication leaders can quickly understand general reactions, confusion or feelings around an announcement.



Use this information to make swift adjustments and share additional communications in targeted areas of the platform. Reacting strategically and in real-time helps drive more effective outcomes and minimize employee distraction.

LEVEL UP

Use Artificial Intelligence and Automation to Support Listening Efforts

Insights about employee engagement and wellbeing don't always come from annual surveys, focus groups and polls. This information already lives within employee conversations happening every day and, for organizations who leverage a digital communication platform, the data is easily accessible.

Save time by using a rules-based platform to automatically identify conversations of interest, such as discussions on a specific topic or one that violates acceptable use policies. This helps eliminate human error and oversight in finding important conversations. Manually reviewing conversations and comments to understand themes and trends is cumbersome and resource intensive. Look for tools, like Aware, that automatically track trends in conversation behavior and highlight anomalies in order to inform strategic decisions and actions. These tools should use enterprise-grade Natural Language Processing (NLP) models to measure conversation sentiment, in addition to conversation integrity and health.

They should also show trends at the macro level across your community, as well as the group or channel level. Get next-level insights by layering Aware's AI-infused technology on top of your organization's digital communication platform.



Event #194017
comment in @ Message - Open Group
Candace P @candace.p · 07 Aug 2018 9:45 PM

Open Remove Event

Scope

Policy/Rule Hierarchy
Internal Comms

Rule Behavior

Encouraged Behavior

Content Platforms

Workplace Platform
Yammer Platform

Included Users

Everyone

Triggers and Actions

If

Messages

contains

AllCo. - Internal Comms Campaign

and

Positive, Very Positive

What if you could automatically measure the Voice of the Employee and get an authentic reflection of how your workforce feels?

With Aware, you can...

- Strengthen organizational insights with information regarding the topics and themes your employees aren't telling you about on surveys
- Get a day-to-day pulse on the engagement of your entire organization
- Understand areas of discontent, unrest or toxicity in your organization

Ready to uncover the unknown?

[Learn more](#)

[Book a demo](#)

