

CONDUCTING A STATE OF THE TEAM CONVERSATION

IMPORTANCE

Measuring engagement alone does not bring about improvement. It is what happens *after* the survey that will help to improve employee engagement and organizational outcomes. At this point, you may be wondering how to use your Gallup Q¹² survey results to bring about these types of changes.

Conducting a State of the Team conversation is one important step in creating transformational change in your company after completing the Gallup Q¹² survey. The purpose of this conversation is to assess the team's current state of engagement. It is the manager's job to listen to his or her employees, learn about the factors influencing their engagement, and lead the team to take actions necessary to realize their performance goals.

But just setting performance goals is not enough. Introducing the principles of engagement into daily conversations is another critical part of making engagement a permanent team characteristic. Holding regular conversations about engagement is a vital strategy for transforming your team into one that is highly engaged.

Therefore, Gallup recommends that managers lead regular conversations about engagement to discuss team members' talents and strengths, highlight the team's progress, recognize growth, and revise goals as needed. See "Conducting Engaging Conversations for Individuals and Teams" section for more information about the purpose and questions managers can use for these ongoing conversations.

GUIDELINES

While managers should lead the State of the Team conversation, it should be a collaborative process during which every employee has an opportunity to contribute. Employee involvement in this process is critical to building engagement.

Gallup recommends following these steps when conducting a State of the Team conversation:

1. Analyze Gallup Q¹² survey results.
2. Identify a team performance goal.
3. Select the engagement item to focus on and identify actions and owners.
4. Review and recalibrate.

AT A GLANCE

Holding a State of the Team conversation about engagement is a vital strategy for transforming your team into one that is highly engaged. This conversation includes the following steps:

1. Analyze Gallup Q¹² survey results.
2. Identify a team performance goal.
3. Select the engagement item to focus on and identify actions and owners.
4. Review and recalibrate.

As you follow these steps, there is a State of the Team tool you can use to record the team's actions to help them stay organized and accountable. Once completed, post this tool in a place where the team can see it regularly, reminding them of their performance goals and commitments.

Step 1: Analyze Gallup Q¹² survey results.

Before distributing the Gallup Q¹² survey results, it is a good idea to review the big picture with your team. Remind employees of the reasoning behind your company's decision to focus on improving employee engagement, beginning with the Gallup Q¹² survey. Stress the overall goal of becoming a highly engaged workplace.

Next, distribute your latest Gallup Q¹² survey results report to your team. You can export Q¹² results as PDF reports via the Gallup Employee Engagement Center Dashboard. As you review the survey results together, ask your team the following questions:

- Do any of the results surprise you?
- What areas of engagement are strong for our team? What are we doing that makes this a strong result?
- What areas of engagement are opportunities for our team? What are we not doing that makes this an opportunity?

Step 2: Identify a team performance goal.

The team should collaboratively identify their most important performance goal. Use the following questions to direct the team conversation as you select a performance goal together:

- What are the three to four important performance goals we face today?
- How would you prioritize these performance goals from most to least important to our team?
- Which performance goal should we focus on as a team? Where are we as a team relative to this performance goal?

Step 3: Select the engagement item to focus on and identify actions and owners.

Once the team has identified a performance goal to focus on, they will need to select the engagement item that, if acted on, will help them reach their performance goal. For example, if a team has a goal to improve trust and collaboration and their score for Q₁₀ ("I have a best friend at work.") was relatively low, then this engagement item would be a great area of focus.

After selecting an engagement item, the team should brainstorm actions that they can take to improve on this engagement item. During this process, the team should discuss how they can take action together and determine ways individuals on the team can act to facilitate team success. Finally, team members need to decide who can take ownership of these actions and keep the team aware of progress.

Use the following questions to guide this step of the conversation:

- Which engagement item do you think we should focus on to help us reach our performance goal?
- What actions do we need to take to have an effect on this engagement item?
- What three to four immediate actions should we focus on first? Who can take ownership of these actions? When can we complete these actions?

Recording action items and owners is critical for maintaining accountability. Use the State of the Team tool to record both of these to help set your team up for success.

Step 4: Review and recalibrate.

Recurring conversations about the team's engagement are a must. Managers should regularly hold five- to 10-minute discussions to evaluate progress, maintain accountability, and recalibrate as necessary. Use the following questions during these discussions:

- Did we complete the action items we said we would?
- Did completing them make a difference?

Recalibrate your actions and owners as needed to ensure that your team is on track for success. Don't expect your first attempt at this process to be perfect — your team will learn from experience and become more effective in identifying actions that facilitate growth and improve team performance.

Gallup Employee Engagement Center offers additional products you can purchase to learn more about managing for improved engagement and high performance. Visit the Gallup Employee Engagement Center Dashboard to learn more.



STEPS TO CHECK

- ✓ Remember that the survey is just the beginning: Applying the Gallup Q¹² survey results during the State of the Team conversation and regularly conducting engaging team and individual discussions is what will lead to improved engagement, growth, and performance.
- ✓ Remember, when leading the State of the Team conversation, you should facilitate discussion and collaboration, actively listening to team members and allowing them to own the process.
- ✓ Take full advantage of the State of the Team conversation tool. Once completed, post it somewhere visible.