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## Stay HR Savvy with HR Elements®

Welcome to the UBA Partner Firm exclusive monthly newsletter, delivering insights into timely human resources and employee benefits topics.

February 2025

- Dear HR Manager | Concerned Leader
- Workplace Culture | Reversing Employee Disengagement
- Employee Benefits | Elevating Wellness

Dear HR Manager,

My team is increasingly having political discussions, and tensions are rising. How can I help my team navigate these conversations professionally?

– *Concerned Leader*

Dear Concerned Leader,

Political discussions can be challenging, especially when they lead to division or employee discomfort. However, with the right approach, you can help foster a culture of respect and open dialogue while maintaining professionalism. Here are three key strategies to consider.

### Establish Clear Communication Guidelines

Set expectations around workplace discussions by outlining professional communication standards. Reinforce the importance of respectful dialogue and discourage inflammatory or discriminatory remarks. Providing examples of acceptable versus inappropriate conversations can help your team understand boundaries. Regularly revisit these guidelines to ensure awareness and compliance.

Inappropriate: "You're wrong. I don't see how anyone could think that way."

Acceptable: "Look, I know we don't see eye to eye on this, but let's change the subject. How 'bout dem Bears?"

## Equip Employees with Conflict Resolution Skills

Ask HR for training in conflict resolution, active listening, and empathy to help employees navigate political discussions constructively. Workshops on unconscious bias and emotional intelligence can also provide valuable tools for engaging across differences. Encouraging your team to model these skills can reinforce their importance and create a more respectful work environment.

## Foster a Culture of Inclusion and Shared Purpose

Rather than allowing political differences to create divisions, emphasize shared goals and values. Organize team-building activities that encourage collaboration and strengthen workplace relationships. Recognize and reward members of your team who demonstrate inclusivity and constructive communication, reinforcing a culture where diverse perspectives are acknowledged but do not interfere with workplace harmony.

By implementing these strategies, you can create an environment where your team feels safe expressing themselves while respecting their colleagues. Encouraging professionalism, empathy, and collaboration will help prevent political discussions from becoming workplace conflicts.

– *HR Manager*

## Workplace Culture | Reversing Employee Disengagement

[Employee disengagement is rising](#), and HR leaders are facing an urgent challenge. Economic uncertainty, shifting workplace dynamics, and increased workloads have left employees disconnected, decreasing job satisfaction and increasing retention risks. Addressing this issue requires proactive strategies that restore engagement, improve workplace morale, and align employees with meaningful work.

### Understanding the Disengagement Trend

The past year has seen a troubling decline in engagement. According to recent data, overall employee satisfaction has dropped compared to previous years, with fewer American workers engaged than in 2018 to 2021.

Additionally, [51% of employees are currently open to or actively seeking new job opportunities](#), marking the highest rate since 2015. These trends signal a pressing need for organizations to reevaluate how they create engagement and job fulfillment.

### Key Strategies to Reignite Engagement

#### Create a Culture of Purpose

Disengagement often stems from employees feeling disconnected from their work's impact. To counter this, leaders must communicate how individual roles contribute to broader company goals. Recognizing employees for their contributions—whether through formal recognition programs or personal acknowledgment—reinforces their sense of value. Aligning work with meaningful objectives helps employees feel invested in their roles and reduces detachment.

## Prioritize Employee Well-Being

Burnout and workplace stress are primary drivers of disengagement. Companies must proactively approach well-being by offering mental health support, flexible work arrangements, and workload management strategies. Studies have linked workplace kindness and inclusion to higher employee morale and productivity, making a strong case for a supportive and psychologically safe work environment.

## Enhance Career Growth and Autonomy

Employees who feel stagnant in their roles are more likely to disengage. Organizations should invest in learning and development programs that provide opportunities for upskilling and career progression. Providing autonomy—through project ownership, mentorship opportunities, or cross-functional collaboration—empowers and keeps employees motivated. Research shows that employees who engage in continuous learning report higher satisfaction and job confidence.

## The Future of Employee Engagement

As organizations navigate the evolving workforce landscape, addressing disengagement is no longer optional—it's essential. Companies that prioritize purpose, well-being, and career development will improve retention and build a resilient, motivated workforce. By taking deliberate action now, HR leaders can reverse disengagement trends and create an environment where employees feel valued, connected, and inspired to contribute.

## Employee Benefits | Elevating Wellness

According to Gallup, employees who feel supported in their well-being [are 69% less likely to seek new opportunities](#). Harvard Business Review reports that [every dollar invested in wellness yields \\$3.27 in medical cost savings and \\$2.73 in reduced absenteeism](#).

Companies should revisit wellness approaches to evolve with trends and attract and retain top talent.

- **Work-Life Integration:** Policies like meeting-free days, paid mental health leave, and remote work flexibility enhance employee satisfaction and prevent burnout.
- **Tech-Driven Fitness:** Tools such as wearable fitness trackers, virtual wellness challenges, and AI-powered health coaching promote healthy habits through gamification and real-time feedback.
- **Optimizing Workplace Design:** Smart design delivers measurable results. The World Green Building Council finds wellness-focused spaces **boost well-being by 15%**. Simple design upgrades—better air quality, lighting, and natural elements—enhance well-being and creativity.
- **Digital Detox Initiatives:** Introduce screen-free hours, wellness breaks, and digital-free meeting days to reduce burnout.
- **Peer-Led Support Circles:** Create employee resource groups (ERGs) for shared experiences, from parenting support to niche networks.
- **Virtual Wellness Retreats:** Offer guided meditation sessions, yoga classes, and mental health workshops.

- On-Demand Therapy Services: Provide instant access to licensed therapists through mobile platforms.
- Financial Literacy Programs: Host workshops on cryptocurrency, investing, and budgeting for modern financial wellness.
- Hybrid Wellness Challenges: Organize competitions like step challenges with both remote and in-office participation.
- Nature-Based Well-Being Initiatives: Host outdoor walking meetings, nature retreats, or community garden projects.

### Wellness as a Competitive Advantage

Companies that invest in impactful wellness strategies support employee well-being and drive retention, engagement, and long-term business success.

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