

How to Engage Your Medical Sales Team



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INTRODUCTION

In today's highly competitive medical sales talent market, employee engagement can make or break your company's chances of success. Creating an engaging environment for your staff, capable of inspiring, motivating, and delighting your team has a huge range of potential benefits.

First, medical sales innovators are more likely to be attracted to job postings for companies offering an "engaging" workplace.

Today's top professionals are increasingly searching for meaning, empathy, and good work/life balance from the organisations they work for.

Investing in engagement is a good way to show candidates you can put their needs first. However, employee engagement isn't just valuable for attracting new talent; it's also critical to retaining the staff members you already have. Right now, people are quitting their jobs in droves, with the average resignation rate in 2021 rising 20% higher than it was in 2020.

The challenges of the last couple of years have pushed employees to re-assess their values, and many are switching jobs to seek higher levels of engagement and satisfaction. In the age of the "Great Resignation", engagement strategies are how you convince top talent to stay put.

In fact, according to Gallup, it takes more than a 20% pay rise to convince an employee to abandon a post where they feel engaged.

Yet it costs next to nothing to lure a disengaged staff member from their jobs.

What's more, the same study shows even if you manage to hold onto a disengaged employee, you may not be getting their best work. The cost of lost productivity related to lack of engagement adds up to losses of around 18% of an employees annual salary. In this report, we'll be looking at how to identify disengaged employees, and what you can do to re-engage, retain, and delight your medical sales staff.

**Thanks,
The Team at Advance Recruitment**

What is Employee Engagement?

To improve employee engagement among medical sales staff, we first need to define what “engagement” means in the workplace. The easiest way to define employee engagement is as the emotional commitment a staff member has to an organisation and its goals.

An “engaged” employee is passionate about their work, invested in the success of the brand, and happy with their position in the company.

According to research, employee engagement and productivity go hand-in-hand. Engaged employees are more likely to give their all in any task, and go above and beyond to benefit the company. They’re keen to prove themselves to their managers, and maintain their position with the business.

Other studies have shown employee engagement also leads to other positive business metrics, such as increased customer satisfaction, efficiency, innovation, and staff retention.

Most medical device companies know an engaged workforce is more beneficial to their bottom line than a disengaged team. Unfortunately, the level of engagement among today’s employees is notoriously low. According to research from Accenture:

- Only 1 in 6 people feel highly connected to their organisation and colleagues.
- About 1 in 4 people believe leaders are responsive to their needs.
- Only 1 in 5 people feel comfortable discussing their needs with colleagues.

On a day-to-day level, only around half of UK workers feel enthusiastic about their roles, and one in three feel “full of energy” at work. On the other hand, a fifth of workers say they feel constantly exhausted, under excessive pressure, and ready to quit or find a new job.

When do Employees Become Disengaged?

Interestingly, most employees don't arrive at a new job feeling disengaged.

If you use the right medical sales recruitment strategy, your candidates should arrive in your business filled with optimism and excitement. So, what causes employees to become disengaged? There are a number of factors which can prompt disengagement among team members. The process of disengagement can happen over several months or years, or it could be a quick response to a significant workplace issue.

One growing issue in the medical sales landscape is the presence of burnout. Jobs for many staff members are becoming more complex and demanding, leading to feelings of exhaustion and fatigue. One of the common symptoms of burnout is being disengaged in the workplace.

Other common causes of disengagement include:

- **Poor management:** Around 75% of employees quit their roles because they're unhappy with their manager. If business leaders don't support and guide their staff, offer recognition and constructive feedback, and collaborate with employees, this often causes disengagement.
- **Lack of workplace relationships:** Relationships in the workplace are important to engagement. All employees want to feel as though they're supported at work, and many want to be friends with their colleagues.
- **Poor communication:** Limited communication in the workplace can often lead to feelings of isolation and distrust. Engaged employees need transparent leaders, regular communication with their team members, and the chance to build relationships.
- **Limited feedback:** Employees want to learn from their mistakes and be recognised for their accomplishments. Around 90% of employees say they work harder when they receive the right recognition.
- **No sense of purpose:** Today's employees want meaning from their jobs. A medical sales staff member without a sense of meaning will start to disconnect from the workplace, and may not feel a sense of ownership over their work.
- **Lack of progression:** All employees want to feel as though their careers are leading somewhere. A lack of opportunities in the form of career growth, training, and development can leave team members frustrated and uninspired.

How to Engage Employees: Building an Engaged Culture

When you recognise the signs of disengagement in your medical sales employees, it's important to act fast to avoid turnover. Research tells us there are various dimensions of working life which contribute to employee engagement, from leadership strategies to workplace relationships. For the most part, however, the best way to build engagement among employees, is to develop a company culture committed to keeping staff satisfied, healthy, and motivated at work.

One of the reasons employee engagement issues are becoming more common in the modern world, is many organisations have yet to update their culture to suit the new priorities and demands of employees. Countless businesses still believe a good "company culture" simply revolves around competitive remuneration and benefits packages, or a fun workplace.

However, creating a culture capable of engaging employees today requires a much heavier focus on humanising the workplace. Companies need to focus on empathy, wellbeing, and flexibility, to both appeal to new employees, and retain their existing staff.

Here are some of the best ways to build a culture of engagement in your medical sales business.

1. Focus on Effective Communication

According to Accenture's research into disengaged employees, one of the most common reasons engagement drops in a business, is because employees feel leaders don't listen to their needs. A lack of communication in the workplace harms everything from feelings of trust and transparency to employee satisfaction levels.

Building a strategy for consistent and positive communication with your medical sales employees ensures you can keep your finger on the pulse of their experiences and expectations. It's an excellent way to find out what's bothering your team members, and where sources of disengagement may begin.

Companies can start by developing a system which makes it easy for staff members to share their feedback about the business experience anonymously. Allowing team members to make comments without the fear of judgement should ensure you can capture more authentic insights.

It's also worth ensuring employees always have someone to turn to when they have questions about the expectations of the business, or their role. An open-door policy among supervisors, HR leaders, and managers can lead to a more trusting and connected community of team members. Leaders in the medical sales space can even send out regular surveys, or questionnaires to ask their staff members how they feel about their role, and what they believe they need to perform at their best.

Aside from improving communication between employees and leaders, it's also worth making sure your staff members have multiple ways to connect and build relationships. This is particularly crucial in the age of hybrid work, where remote staff can often feel isolated from the rest of the team. Host regular video meetings and town-hall sessions where you can discuss changes in the business, or simply promote bonding between colleagues.

2. Prioritise Feedback and Recognition

Feedback is important for any medical sales staff member to ensure they can continue serving the best interests of the company. Even negative feedback, at times, can be a good way to set expectations for team members, and help them to avoid common mistakes.

Developing a strategy for consistent feedback delivered by managers and supervisors to medical sales staff members can help to create a sense of transparency and continued growth among teams.

The most important form of feedback to focus on for most companies will be positive recognition. Around 72% of business leaders say recognition has a significant influence on employee engagement. Yet countless employees feel as though they don't get enough thanks for their work. Showing recognition to your team members when they accomplish something is an excellent way to boost their sense of "meaning" in the workplace. A simple "Thank you" sent via an email or text message can be enough to motivate staff members to continue working towards their goals.

Some companies even go a step further, and implement gamification techniques to encourage positive competition between employees. Awarding prizes and gifts to team members who achieve the best results for your business is a great way to get everyone invested in their work.

Rewards don't necessarily need to be monetary either. Some employees will appreciate being given the option to work an extra day remotely as a reward, or the opportunity to take part in an important business project.

3. Start Focusing on Wellbeing

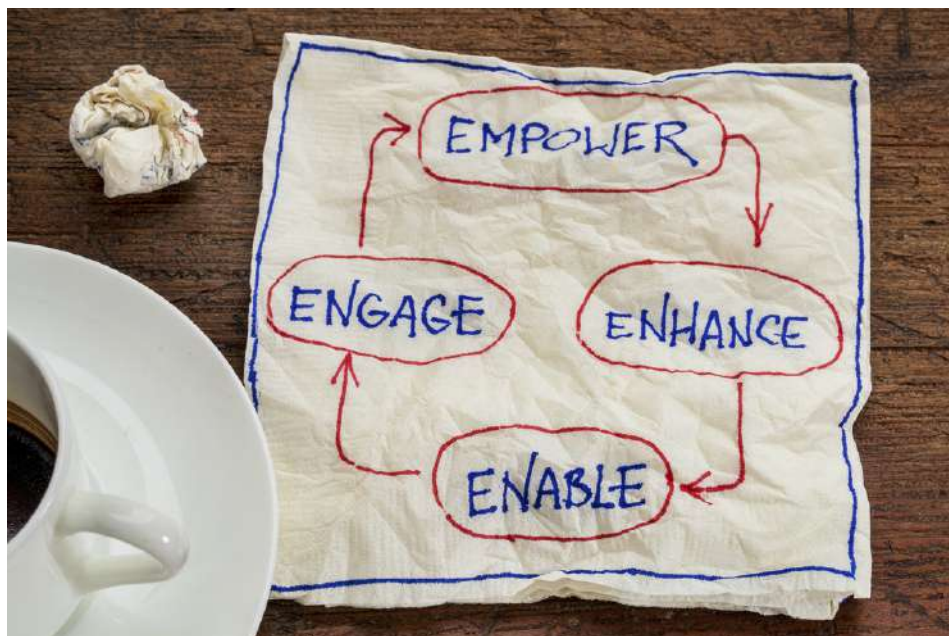
Today's medical sales talent want to work for a company that cares about their needs. Improving health and wellbeing strategies in the workplace demonstrates to both new and existing employees that you care about their continued wellness.

According to the CIPD's Health and Wellbeing at work report, implementing wellbeing initiatives leads to a healthier, more inclusive culture in the workplace, as well as better employee morale and engagement. However, many companies still consider wellbeing a “nice-to-have” element, rather than a necessity for happy employees.

Focusing on wellbeing not only improves engagement, but it can also reduce levels of absenteeism and lost productivity in the workplace. Since the pandemic, more staff members have been suffering from increased levels of stress and anxiety, and these are some of the main causes of long-term absences and burnout.

By implementing wellbeing initiatives, you can demonstrate a level of empathy to your employees, and reduce the number of people you lose to illness. Wellness programs can include:

- Mental health days which allow team members to work at home when they're feeling stressed, anxious, or in need of personal space.
- Mental and physical health support from specialists connected to the workplace. For instance, you could hire a counsellor to talk to medical sales staff once a month.
- Strategies for work/life balance like allowing team members to change their working hours according to their needs, or decide where they want to work each day.



4.Implement Flexible Working Opportunities

Flexible working opportunities have become increasingly commonplace in the last couple of years. Since the pandemic, more team members have begun working from home – even on a part-time basis. Around 80% of firms in the UK have adopted some level of hybrid work.

Offering flexible working options to your employees is an excellent way to get them more invested in their roles, and keep them happy at work. Staff members with the ability to work from home are often more satisfied and productive. What's more, Gallup studies show flexible work also drives engagement, making team members feel more enthusiastic about their jobs.

While not every medical sales role will lend itself to a remote working structure, there are multiple ways companies can experiment with flexibility. For instance, you could:

- **Try hybrid work:** Hybrid work models blend in-office and remote work to ensure the people who can work from home have the opportunity to do so, when it makes sense.
- **Explore the 4 day work week:** Four-day work weeks are becoming increasingly popular throughout the UK, giving employees more time to recover from their work days.
- **Allow for schedule changes:** Allowing employees to work different hours on specific days based on their other commitments can make them more grateful to the business.

Speaking to team members about the kinds of flexibility they might like to see in the workplace is a great way to start planning on a new strategy. You can also track the results of your flexibility efforts to see which are paying off for your company.



5. Facilitate and Support Employee Development

92% of employees believe access to professional development is very important when they're deciding where to work. What's more, employees with professional development opportunities are 15% more engaged at work, and 34% more likely to stay with the business.

According to a study by LinkedIn, 94% of employees said they would even stay with a business for longer if they knew there were opportunities for development in place. Building a culture which champions growth, learning, and opportunities is an excellent way to ensure engagement.

There are a few ways companies can adjust their culture to focus on development, such as:

- **Setting goals with employees:** Arranging meetings between medical sales staff members and managers where they can discuss short and long-term goals is a fantastic way to find out what your team members want to achieve. When managers help employees to achieve their goals, this improves workplace relationships, and helps staff to feel more committed to their role and the brand they work for.
- **Offering training opportunities:** Training is something every medical sales company should be investing in from time to time. Particularly now as the workplace continues to change at a record rate, it's important to upskill and re-skill staff on a regular basis. Finding out what your team members want to learn, or which talents they want to improve and offering the right training solutions is crucial.
- **Providing mentorship programs:** Mentorship programs are excellent not just for encouraging a culture of learning, but also for boosting employee relationships. Allowing team members to choose a mentor and work with them regularly on their professional development plan will build a happier, more engaged culture.

6. Let Team Members in on the Big Picture

Transparency and honesty have become major factors in any employee's decision of where to work, and whether to continue working with certain brands. A common complaint among disengaged employees in the medical sales space is they don't always know what's going on over their heads. If your employees don't know the strategy and direction of the business, this can lead to concerns about job stability and future growth. It could also mean employees don't know which values they should be focusing on to prove themselves to their employers.

Creating a culture of “transparency”, where you keep team members in the loop about major decisions made by the company is an excellent way to encourage staff buy-in. When employees know what's happening in their business, they're more likely to feel like an important part of the team.

It's also worth looking for ways to connect the work of your medical sales employees to the bigger picture or goals the business wants to pursue. Around 92.4% of employees say they work better when they see how the quality of their work matters to the targets of the business.

As talented professionals search for more meaning in their work, helping team members to see how their efforts influence the business can help to improve motivation levels.



How to Continue Building on Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is crucial to the success of any business. However, building any engaging company culture and delighting your staff isn't a set-it-and-forget-it process. It's not enough to simply implement the strategies above and then ignore engagement again.

As the preferences of medical sales employees continue to evolve, business leaders need to make sure they're tuned into what their team members really want and need.

Regularly measuring engagement through surveys, meetings and feedback should help you to pinpoint areas where you need to continue improving. For instance, you may discover you need to:

- Train your leadership team: Helping your leaders to develop new skills for managing hybrid and remote workers could be crucial as your business continues to evolve. The more effective your leaders are, the more engaged your staff are likely to be.
- Improve technology: As the workplace evolves, some medical sales staff members may need additional technology to make them more productive in their roles. Keeping an eye on the software, hardware, and other critical solutions your staff needs is crucial.
- Adjust your onboarding process: Engaging employees should start from the moment you begin searching for a new staff member. You should be looking for ways to engage candidates with your job descriptions, and generate enthusiasm among new hires during the onboarding and training process.

The feedback you gather from your team members will help you to determine where you should be focusing your efforts to generate the best levels of engagement.



Don't Underestimate Employee Engagement

Disengaged employees are becoming increasingly commonplace in the medical sales landscape. The good news is these team members aren't necessarily a lost cause. Employing the practices and strategies above should help you to re-engage your team members, and develop a company culture which both attracts and retains top talent.

Rather than simply standing by when your top workers are considering resignation, make sure you're ready to act and transform your business into the working environment the best talent is looking for.

As you continue to work on and optimise your engagement methods, you'll also want to ensure your efforts shine through in your recruitment strategy.

Highlighting the strategies you use to engage and support your employees when working with medical sales recruitment company can make it easier for them to attract the right talent to your team.

If you would like to find out how we help our clients recruit call us on 0161 969 9700 or email us here info@advancerecruitment.net

About Advance Recruitment

Advance Recruitment is a specialist medtech recruitment agency with a focus on filling commercial positions. Founded in 1997, we are the longest established recruitment agency in our sector. Based in Manchester, our in depth knowledge of the medtech sector allows us to help our clients attract the brightest talent and enables our candidates to build exciting and fulfilling careers. We work with everyone from large, blue-chip multinational companies to SMEs and start up organisations.

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For the time I have been working at Essity (previously SCA Hygiene), one of my go-to recruitment agencies has been Advance Recruitment for healthcare and medical related roles. I can't say that about many agencies, so 12 years is a great reflection of what Advance have done!

The words 'true partnership' spring to mind when thinking about why I use them. It takes time to understand different roles and the culture of an organisation, but they do just that. I have one point of contact, Karen McCurdy, and this has been the same person since day 1 (how often does that happen?). Of course, Karen works with a team who all have an input on resourcing and interviewing candidates, but ultimately, I am always speaking to the same person who has taken their time to understand who we are and what we do.

I like that they work with the principle of quality rather than quantity when it comes to placing candidates in front of us. It is much more engaging to interview a couple of good people for a vacancy rather than spending valuable time on a number that are not aligned to what we are looking for. All of this has established a professional working relationship that benefits Essity. Thanks to Karen and the team at Advance Recruitment!

Mark Young, HR Essity UK (former Talent Acquisition Manager)

I had worked with Advance Recruitment in a previous role and found that the standard of candidates they referred matched the agreed candidate profile. We were having issues with recruitment that mostly consisted of poor quality and quantity of referred candidates. This was causing extended delays with our recruitment process and requiring additional investment of our resources to resolve. After I reached out to Dave, we immediately seen an increase in candidate referrals that matched our required profile. This eased our recruitment issues very quickly and made our recruitment process very simple and efficient.

Jim Pallas, UK&I Commercial Director - Amcare



TESTIMONIALS



Sourcing and selecting talent is one of, if not the most important aspect of a managers role. To build a highly successful, diverse, collaborative & motivated team you need the right people with the right skill sets and the desire to succeed. To help you do this it is imperative that you partner with a recruitment team that knows you and your business inside out and more importantly can identify and source the right people for you.

I have been in medical sales for 29 years and worked with many recruitment teams along the way. Lately I have been working with Advance Recruitment and Karen McCurdy who have been first class. You are not fed CV's en masse but given a select few that they know will suit you, your business and compliment your team dynamics. Advance Recruitment and Karen are a very valuable extension of my team!

Nick Roberts, Sales Director UK and Ireland , Atos Medical UK

I have worked with Karen and the Advance Recruitment team to help us source a number of sales and marketing vacancies. I have really enjoyed working with Karen, she is easy to communicate with and worked me out quickly which helped us both! What stood out for me was her ability to genuinely listen and understand what I wanted and the skill set and person I was after. This was something other recruiters can miss and I find frustrating. So it was great to be understood and see quality candidates being put forward.

It's not been an easy time finding the right people during COVID and the video interviewing platform really helped me balance and manage my time effectively to screen the candidates that I wanted to take to the next stage of the process. We will definitely be working with Karen and the team again for our next hire.

Tom Atkinson, Country Manager, Nipro Diagnostics Ltd

