



3 Ways to Keep People Engaged and the Cost if You Don't

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This week, we received an award as one of the [Top 50 Most Engaged Companies by Achievers](#). While the award is great, it's not terribly surprising. We've been receiving high marks on Engagement from our associates for over a decade.

What is engagement? For us at Alliance Data, we break it up into three components: the pride that our associates have in the company; their willingness to recommend us as a best place to work; and their desire to do and deliver more while they're here. We work hard to make sure our people are truly engaged on all three of those levels.

What we've discovered, is that you can't make pride in the company a goal on its own. You have to look at some drivers that can have an impact on company pride. Here are 3 ways that we have found have had the most impact on increasing our employees' engagement:

1. We're a good [corporate citizen](#).



We take pride in giving back in the communities where we work and live. We provide opportunities for our associates to participate in that giving back through volunteer events and matching gifts programs. This month kicks off our annual United Way campaign which is something the all our U.S. associates rally behind and incorporates different local flavor and perks based on office location. We've given over \$9.4 million in 2015 in the communities where our associates live and work, and our associates are proud to be a part of that.

2. Our associates have great relationships with their managers.

There's a real sense of team everywhere in the company. It's been said time and time again that people don't leave companies, they leave managers. That's why we invest in training our managers and giving them the tools they need to be successful. They may not always have all of the answers, but our associates trust them. Our managers do a great job of recognizing their teams formally through our various reward platforms and informally as things come up. They treat people with respect and make sure that everyone wants to give 110% when they come in each day.

3. People have a voice.



90% of our associates participated in our annual engagement survey this year, where they have a chance to tell us how we're doing as an employer. That's astonishing. But we don't just listen to people once a year through a formal process. We encourage them to always speak up and let someone know if there are better ways to do things. We strongly encourage innovation. We know there are great minds here and that management doesn't always have the answers. People feel comfortable voicing those ideas and know that they'll be heard, even if it's not acted upon in all cases.

Engagement isn't easy and doesn't come on its own, it takes work. It can also become [a pitfall if you aren't careful](#). And that's why we make a conscious decision to invest in programs like the three I mentioned. Stats from Gallup show that 51% of workers aren't engaged with their work, which translates to \$370 billion lost in the U.S. economy. Our people are our business. It's what sets us apart and why our clients stay. Why wouldn't we want them to be proud to be on this journey with us?