

Employee Engagement and Happiness Crisis. What Should We Do?

Source: josh-bersin | **Author:** joshbersin | **Published:** August 12, 2025 | **PMS Relevance:** PMS RELATED | **Type:** Opinion/Commentary | **Geography:** Global

Source URL: <https://joshbersin.com/2025/08/employee-engagement-and-happiness-crisis-what-sho>

Executive Summary

This article addresses declining employee engagement and workplace happiness as reported through various surveys and reports. Bersin argues that only 21% of workers are fully engaged according to 2025 Gallup data, with managers particularly affected, and links this crisis to factors including AI fears, remote work reversals, and broader societal issues. The piece presents evidence from multiple studies including the World Happiness Report and Adecco research showing widespread workplace fear and job instability concerns. Bersin proposes ten organizational practices to address these challenges, ranging from purpose-driven leadership to human-centered management approaches, positioning employee wellbeing as essential for business performance and organizational sustainability.

Key Insights

1. Manager engagement has dropped significantly with only 27% engaged according to cited Gallup data, with young managers particularly affected
2. AI-related job fears dominate workplace anxiety, with 40% of employees worried about job stability according to Adecco research
3. Productivity research suggests optimal output occurs at 30-35 hours per week, contradicting the trend toward extended work schedules

Practical Takeaways

- Organizations can implement dynamic role changes and internal mobility to increase engagement and profitability
- Recognition and appreciation programs demonstrate significant impact on retention, with high-recognition cultures showing 70% lower voluntary turnover

Frameworks Mentioned

Dynamic Organization — Organizational model that enables regular employee role changes and internal mobility

Time under Tension — Communication approach that forces difficult conversations when performance issues arise

Irresistible Organizations — Bersin's framework for high-engagement companies that consistently outperform peers

Critical Analysis

The article presents compelling data points but lacks verification for several statistics, particularly the specific 2025 Gallup figures. Bersin's extensive self-referencing to his own research and platforms raises questions about objectivity. The piece effectively synthesizes multiple data sources but the ten-point solution framework appears more prescriptive than evidence-based. Some claims about productivity curves and recognition impact include specific percentages that would benefit from source verification.

Organizational Practice

Organizations implementing dynamic role changes, internal mobility programs, recognition platforms, and human-centered leadership approaches to address engagement challenges

Strategic Implications

The convergence of AI anxiety, management burnout, and societal factors suggests performance management systems may need fundamental redesign to address psychological safety and wellbeing alongside traditional productivity metrics

Validation Status: passed

Generated by Peoplense (peoplense.com) on 2026-07-17 22:37 UTC