

# Employee Engagement during COVID-19

**Employee Engagement** is the extent to which individuals find their work meaningful and energizing, and feel inspired, proud and attached to their organization and their work (Canadian Inter-jurisdictional Engagement Analytics Team, 2018; OECD). Government of Prince Edward Island's Employee Survey was administered in 2008, 2010, 2012, 2015, and 2018, where the overall engagement index (74.7%) is the highest engagement number we have recorded. This survey also yielded the largest volume of employee comments ever received.

**Employee engagement is more important than ever!** This resource is intended for leaders to support employee engagement through the Covid-19 pandemic. With some of the workforce working remotely, and some back in the office, it remains vital for managers, supervisors and directors to engage with the various working populations they are leading. Included are multiple actionable steps to foster engagement within your department in hopes of improving communication, recognition, echoing the value of individuals' work, building and maintaining trust and importantly, having fun together.

**Regular communication:** Remaining connected becomes increasingly important now that employees do not see each other every day. There are a number of communication tools we can use while working remotely that can serve not only as tools to communicate but also to manage project progress and even work on projects collaboratively. Video calls (WebEx), collaboration tools (e.g. Alfresco), and even a phone call can help connect employees to the workplace, and each other. Staying connected not only to individuals but as team acts as a cornerstone in team collaboration and cohesion as well as team efficiency and output. Other ways to stay connected as groups are running fun contests and sharing progress through email updates, and sending out weekly newsletters with any staffing updates or additional information that might be of interest to the department.

**Appreciation, recognition and celebration:** Even if you are not able to celebrate birthdays, special occasions and achievements in person, it does not mean that you do not get to celebrate them. Ensure that your employees feel valued, and by taking the time to recognize these celebrations and achievements, it can boost the morale of the individual and the team. This can happen in various ways, from video calls, surprise gift drop-offs, or circulating photos of the team's achievement. No matter how big or small it is the thought that counts and by bringing the team together to celebrate and recognizing different achievements, it can boost morale, productivity and job satisfaction. There is a lot of awesome, hard work happening in the public service right now!

**Learning and development:** Covid-19 does not mean that learning has to stop. There are many online learning opportunities provided through the PSC and employees still have goals for development. Sharing professional and personal development opportunities with employees and encouraging their participation/ registration demonstrates that you are there to support their growth and overarching career goals. All PSC's learning opportunities will be virtual this year; promoting easier access and inclusion of all employees.

**Communicate expectations and build trust:** Essential pieces when managing a blended workforce is establishing expectations and being transparent. When employees know they are trusted to carry out their workload at home, their performance will reflect it. When leadership provides constant communication checking in on work-related items but also personal plans and activities, it creates a strong relationship that will have a positive impact on the department's work performance. We are looking to work towards a new normal in the workplace, and being flexible and putting trust in your employees are integral steps.

## References:

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