



# Five Signs of an Effective State of the Team Conversation

*When employees and managers discuss employee engagement survey results, these conversations can lead to increased engagement, enhanced collaboration and improved performance.*

There are countless benefits to leading a State of the Team conversation well. But there are also many ways a poor State of the Team conversation will undermine a team's engagement. Ultimately, managers who care about employee engagement need to care just as much about doing something with the feedback they receive during the conversation. The payoff for conducting this conversation effectively will be improved employee engagement and measurable performance increases.

The most effective State of the Team conversations share five characteristics:

- 1 The manager approaches the team conversation with a natural curiosity.**

A team's Q<sup>12</sup> employee engagement results are only a snapshot of the team's engagement at a particular moment in time. The best way to understand the numbers on the survey and to know what is really going on with the workgroup is to discuss the results with the team. A manager's job is to listen to his or her team members, learn about the factors influencing their engagement and lead them to take the actions necessary to realize their performance goals. Listening provides an opportunity to gain a better understanding of what the team needs to be successful and to help team members work together more effectively.
- 2 Every member of the team is actively involved in the conversation.**

Employee involvement in a conversation about the state of the team is crucial to building engagement. To be effective, a State of the Team conversation must be a collaborative process during which every employee has an opportunity to contribute. The best managers clear any obstacles to helpful discussion and encourage participation. In the best State of the Team conversations, team members speak more than the manager does.
- 3 The team creates goals and builds a clear plan to enhance engagement and improve performance.**

Teams that discuss their survey results, create goals and plans to increase their engagement, and follow through on those goals achieve higher engagement than teams that do not take these steps. What differentiates the most successful teams from others is that their goals are clear and actionable. With straightforward goals and actions, it is easy to know whether the team has accomplished its goals or is on its way to doing so. It is also easy to explain who is doing what and by when.

**4 The team takes ownership for its engagement and its State of the Team action plan.**

Creating a great work environment is everyone's responsibility. While a manager can do a lot to create a positive and productive environment, each employee needs to contribute to improving engagement throughout the team. Gallup has established a strong statistical correlation between the degree to which team members feel that they have conscientiously created and implemented an action plan to improve the work environment and their overall sense of engagement. A State of the Team conversation is an opportunity for the team to work together to identify actions to build a better, stronger work environment. Distribute the actions and responsibilities identified during the State of the Team conversation to all team members.

**5 The team does not focus on the engagement score, but rather on how the team can create a more engaging and productive work environment.**

The survey results should be a starting point for dialogue, action planning and follow-up. The real power of Gallup's Q<sup>12</sup> employee engagement survey is the opportunity it provides to identify and address issues on a team and in an organization. The focus of the conversation should not be about the engagement score; it should be about doing what is right as a team. Focusing on doing what is right as a team will result in an improved engagement score.