

# Employees Rising (10 Years Later): *Advocacy, Activism, Agency*

**In 2014, United Minds first discovered an important global trend in brand reputation:** employees in countries worldwide were – unprompted – speaking out on behalf of their organizations using their nascent social media platforms. Ten years and two additional studies later, we checked back on the state of employee activism, from current levels of engagement to perspectives on leadership. Our findings span 14 countries across six continents.

What we found should leave every employer asking how they can continue to upend and recalibrate employee engagement efforts so that they earn value and drive maximum impact: on satisfaction, on retention, on productivity and on advocacy.

**6 in 10+** employees agree with each of **50** different positive statements about their personal experience with and observations of their employer.

For questions tracked between 2014 and 2024, employee perceptions were higher in every category.

Over the past 10 years, **employees have become more...**

likely to feel supported by their employer

**67%** agree they receive fair pay and benefits (**↑13 pts.**)

**65%** have the training and resources they need (**↑5 pts.**)

**63%** feel valued (**↑10 pts.**)

connected to their leadership

**66%** agree leadership is creating a good culture (**↑14 pts.**)

**65%** say leadership actions reflect org. values (**↑9 pts.**)

**57%** believe leadership is transparent and open (**↑12 pts.**)

likely to care about their job

**74%** put a great deal of effort into their job (**↑3 pts.**)

**69%** care about employer's purpose (**↑4 pts.**)

**67%** are very satisfied with their job (**↑6 pts.**)

workplaces have become (slightly) more stable  
the brand credibility gap is closing:

**78%** have experienced at least one change event in the last year, **↓6 points** despite tracking 9 additional categories

**33%** have experienced a "top tier" event (layoff, M&A, crisis or disaster) **↓9 points**

**67%** say how their employer portrays itself in the media matches what it's like to work there **↑14 pts**

New questions show

there are even higher levels of agreement that...

working conditions are positive

**72%** say people at my job treat each other with civility and respect

**70%** are able to balance work priorities and personal life

**67%** feel motivated to do their best work

leaders are committed to employee success

**65%** agree leadership works to make everyone included and respected

**64%** feel aligned with the priorities of the organization's leadership

**62%** believe leadership works to create a shared vision for the future

and yet...

## Employees are less likely to take action on behalf of their organization ...

49%

have recommended their employer as a great place to work ...

↓ 9 pts.

43%

have encouraged others to buy company products or services ...

↓ 14 pts.

37%

have defended their employer to others ...

↓ 22 pts.

## ... and more likely to be open to new opportunities

40%

would change jobs tomorrow if given the chance

43%

would consider organizing as part of a union

It's clear

# the bar is getting higher

## An exception? Employees with high levels of agency.

We identified employees with high levels of agency as those who strongly agreed they...

### Make an impact

1

I understand how my role contributes to my organization's success

2

I can make a positive impact on client / customer experience through my work

### Feel valued

3

I feel valued as an employee

Many employees at least somewhat agree with one of these criteria (76%, 74% and 63%, respectively).

Only 13% strongly agree with all three.

## Creating an environment where employees can make an impact AND feel valued is critical ...

High agency employees are...

3X

more likely to be very satisfied

2.1X

more likely to be very productive

1.4X

more likely to advocate for their employer

4.2X

more likely to stay with their employer

# With emerging employee agency in mind,

how can employers recalibrate employee engagement efforts to drive maximum impact?

Highly empowered employees clearly deliver significant benefits to the organization, on top of having a better workplace experience. Yet, the question for leaders is how they can best cultivate an environment that drives these significant benefits. Our research shows that leaders have an opportunity to become even more strategic in approaching employee engagement, and more rigorous in creating workplaces oriented around critical business goals.

Using a multifactor analysis, we identified the key drivers of four talent metrics tracked by most sophisticated organizations. For each metric, rather than focusing on delivering improvements across all 50 elements of experience, there are three or four value drivers that lead to these results and, in turn, deliver value to employees.

## Employee Value Driver

### Satisfaction

- Increased feeling of being valued
- More trust in leadership
- Better organizational culture
- Higher morale and motivation

### Retention

- Higher job satisfaction
- More effective company communications
- Increased trust in direct management
- Better treatment

### Advocacy

- Higher job satisfaction
- More connection to, and pride in, the CEO
- More growth and development opportunities

### Productivity

- More opportunities to make a positive impact
- Increased pride in the company
- Managers who are committed to employee success

## Other areas of focus driving 2X – 9X positive impact on experience overall:

1

Quality, Aligned Communications

2

Supportive Direct Managers

3

Leaders Who Drive a Positive Culture

4

Strong Company Reputation

United Minds is a global management consultancy dedicated to making business more human through organizational transformation. We combine cultural intelligence, leadership strategies, change management principles and our deep roots in communications to help communicators adapt and evolve themselves and their function, and reimagine how communications is done.

About Us

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