



## Measure Engagement, Manage for Retention

How can your resort evolve to a higher level of functioning and gain the advantage in competing for talent? By motivating valued employees and creating succession plans supported by professional development, while concurrently de-motivating and cycling out non-performers, you can improve the operational effectiveness of your resort and your competitive edge.

The payoff will be increased profits, talent retention, and the development of the kind people who can succeed their managers. With expert help, managers can accurately measure where their employees are in the “Engagement Cycle” and then masterfully manage for retention to upwardly evolve their resort operations.

### Stage 1: Evaluation

The Engagement Cycle begins with evaluation when a new hire considers employment and continues after s/he accepts an offer. Job acceptance is not job commitment—it merely indicates that the new hire believes the job will meet their basic needs. Evaluation will continue for 90 days or more after beginning work, until this person moves more into the committed stage. The sooner a manager can move him/her from evaluation to commitment, the lower the risk of disengagement.

During evaluation, the manager has a valuable opportunity to mea-

sure the quality of the new hire’s experience. Yet, in new employment relationships, there is often little time to establish the trust that is critical to candid communication. Partnering with outside experts to measure new hire job satisfaction demonstrates the employer’s interest in learning if employee expectations are being met. Early misunderstandings can be easily managed this way to help develop a more trusting relationship. This can even shorten the evaluation phase to move to the next level.

### Stage 2: Commitment

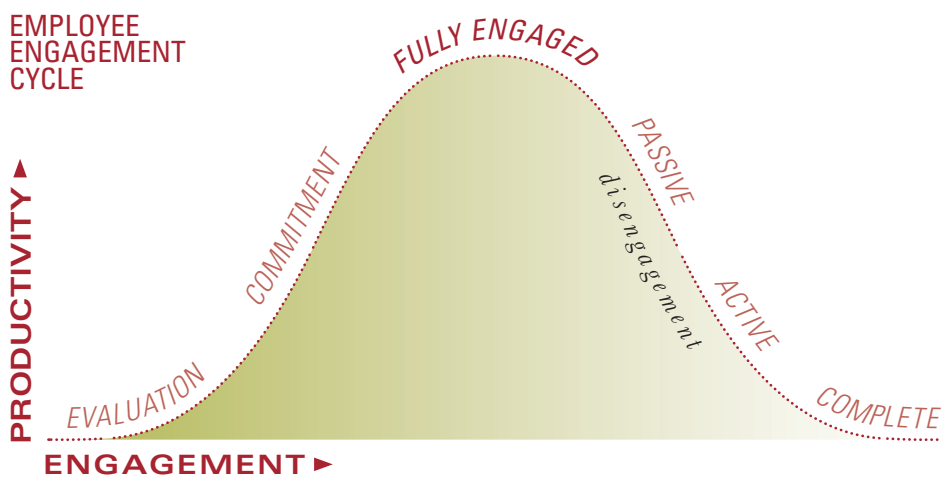
Commitment results when employees

experience the job as meeting more than just basic needs. They feel pride in their employer and their work and actively commit to both. Assigning internal mentors can maintain open communication, offer peer oversight of training, and increase productivity as job satisfaction and coworker relationships develop.

### Stage 3: Engagement

The committed employee then moves into the next stage, engagement, which is where you want them to stay for as long as possible. At this point, it’s helpful to create a resort-specific survey in which s/he (1) sees that employees can have influence in the company and (2) can take ownership of the results. A customized survey and process produces a reliable baseline for business decisions, setting priorities, targeting resources for maximum impact, and assigning accountability for change with action plans and timelines. Directly engaging them in change efforts increases buy-in when they see how they can make a difference at work.

This lifts morale and contributes to retaining productive employees who proudly deliver quality guest services. With many top performers working, learning, and growing in a clear plan, you can both retain employees and attract and create new high-quality ones. (continued on p. 57)



RCI/Cendant to become the core of The Registry Collection.

Now, Carl is CEO of Star Resort Group, a shared ownership developer and marketer based in Scottsdale, Arizona. They work primarily with private residence clubs in Colorado, California, and Montana. Completed private residence club projects are located in Lake Tahoe; Snowmass and Steamboat Springs, Colorado; Cave Creek, Arizona; Pinehurst, North Carolina; and Stowe, Vermont.

### Continued Service

Carl has been a member of ARDA since 1973. He is a former ARDA Chairman and has been a member of the Board of Directors for more than 18 years. He has served chair of the ARDA International Foundation's Educational Institute and of the Meetings and Membership Committees. He has also been the chair of the National Timeshare Council.

His path has certainly been a pioneer's, as he's helped the industry grow on many fronts and stay ahead of the consumer demands. **D**

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## Workforce

### Measure, Manage, Retain (cont.)

#### Stage 4: Disengagement

In the engaged phase, employees are highly unlikely to move to disengagement or to consider a job change. So how does this happen? Disengagement has three levels: passive, active, and complete. When basic needs go unmet, passive disengagement gains momentum in proportion to the priority of

the unmet need and the degree of dissatisfaction. Passively disengaged employees may be impacted by complaints from completely disengaged coworkers who may move them into active disengagement. They will listen inquisitively to friends from your competitors who are excited about their jobs. This is a crucial tipping point where, if managers address their dissatisfaction, good employees can be motivated to return to full engagement. Without caring intervention at this stage, passive disengagement will likely become active disengagement.

Active disengagement is tough to reverse. While physically present, the employee has mentally exited and may be actively seeking another job. Complaints to coworkers about the resort, the supervisor, etc., negatively impact morale, and engaged employees lose respect for managers who tolerate their substandard behavior. The guest experience suffers as well. At complete disengagement, managers

are wise to terminate employees (regardless of skills, abilities, and tenure) because of costs associated with negativity and low productivity.

#### Applying to Your Workplace

The opportunity for managers to upwardly evolve resort operations lies partly in measuring and managing the various engagement levels of all employees. By providing professional development with a vision for the future via succession planning, managers can compete for limited talent in the future—and improve profits in the process. To do this, reliable data (versus just anecdotal) is the key. As Warren Buffett said, "In God we trust. All others bring data." **D**

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