



LABOR OF LOVE:

What Employees Love About
Work & Ways To Keep The
Spark Alive

2015 SURVEY REPORT

Introduction

As an employer, you've heard the perks of having a healthy, happy, engaged workforce, and by now it's probably no news to you: employees who love the companies they work for are engaged, productive, loyal ones. They're the people contributing to your bottom-line business benefits, producing quality work, and staying with your organization for the long haul.

But, when the spark's fizzled out – or if it was never there to start – short of wining and dining your workforce, what can you do? How can you help motivate those feelings and show your workforce just how much you care, while keeping them engaged and motivated on the job?

Virgin Pulse's latest survey of more than 1,000 full-time employees (not Virgin Pulse members) in the U.S. and Canada uncovers how employees really feel about their employers. It highlights what employees really love about work – and what they don't – and how it's all impacting their overall well-being, right along with their engagement, productivity, and ability to focus.

Read on and learn:

Top reasons employees **feel the love** from their companies and ways to charm them that work

What's missing in the employer/employee relationship and how to make up **before you break up**

The surprising factors most important to employees' workplace happiness and what'll **win them over**

Love makes the workplace go round

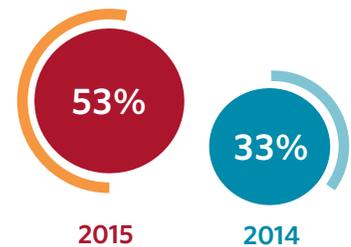
One thing's clear: when it comes to an engaged workforce, the manager/employee relationship is key.

With nearly **60 percent of respondents saying their relationship with their employer positively impacts their focus or productivity at work, and 44 percent saying it positively impacts their stress levels**, it's clear that a supportive manager is critical in driving employees' workplace happiness.

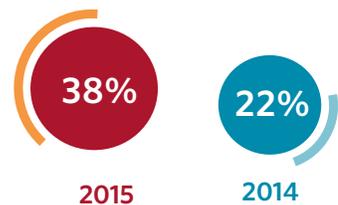
Another engagement driver? The work itself.

With 53 percent saying interesting and challenging work is the No. 1 reason they love their company – an increase of 20 percent from 2014 – it's clear the day-to-day work and larger projects play a part in their overall happiness. The company's mission was another top contender among the reasons employees love where they work, at 38 percent. Notably, this category seems to have had a greater impact on employees' love for their workplace in 2015, with a year-over-year increase of nearly 20 percent.

What do employees love about their work and companies?



Interesting and challenging work



The company's mission



TIP 1

Encourage employees to make meaningful progress on their work, while clearly connecting them to their department goals, company KPIs, and the overall mission. Try leveraging productivity apps and software to support them in identifying and prioritizing each day's most important task, and encourage them to communicate it with their managers, co-workers, and other departments. Take it a step further by educating managers on the importance of strong relationships, and encourage them to make it clear they care.



It's a balancing act

When it comes to how they feel about the organizations they're working for, employees' loving feelings have dropped in the past year. While the outlook overall remains high, with **67 percent of respondents saying they love or have no major complaints about their company**, it's a nearly 10 percent decrease from 2014.

So, what's behind the employee sentiment and why the dip?

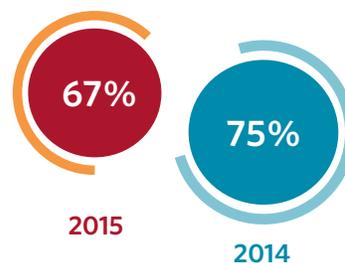
Despite employer's best efforts, poor work/life balance could be to blame. **Supporting work/life balance was ranked as the No. 1 way companies can show employees they care, and nearly 40 percent of employees said they wished their employer cared more about their work/life balance** - a figure unwavering from last year.

Given these results, it's unsurprising that **44 percent indicated flexible work arrangements as the No. 1 benefit they'd love to have at their company**, down only slightly from last year's more than 50 percent indicating it as the top benefit they'd like. What's more, when asked to rank the top ways companies can show they care about their employees, "support work/life balance" was ranked No. 1 by 35 percent of respondents. "Show appreciation for my contributions" came in second and "core benefits (401K, insurance, etc.)," third, both at 27 percent.

It may also be that there's a disconnect between what employees wished their employer cared about, and what benefits, programs, and resources employers are actually offering to communicate that they care. **Thirty percent of employees chose "free programs and resources supporting my well-being" as the top benefit they'd like their employer to offer. The same amount chose "on-site gyms, fitness classes or health club reimbursements."**

This falls in line with results from a separate survey on employee well-being and benefits, which found there's a significant gap in what employers offer and what employees want. For example, 72 percent of employees want physical activity programs and 62 percent want on-site gyms or fitness classes - but just 54 percent and 37 percent offer those benefits, respectively.¹

Employees' feelings for their companies



Employees who love or feel pretty good about their company

¹ Virgin Pulse. "The Business of Healthy Employees." 2014.

TIP 2

Robust benefits and programs show just how much you support your people, but make sure what you're offering aligns with what they're looking for. Consider issuing company-wide surveys or forming an employee committee to take a temperature check and get feedback about what benefits and resources would help them feel the love and better balance all aspects of life.

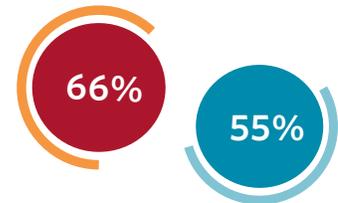
Best (work) friends forever

The secret to happy, engaged, high-performing employees might be as simple as having an office bestie.

Nearly **40 percent of respondents indicated their co-workers as the top reason they love their company**, a jump of nearly 30 percent year-over-year. Perhaps even better, **66 percent of respondents indicated their relationship with colleagues positively impacts their focus or productivity at work**. What's more, **55 percent said their colleagues positively impact their stress levels on the job**.

Co-workers' influence on an individual's well-being and engagement is no surprise. In fact, employees who have a best friend at work are seven times more likely to be engaged and are thriving in their careers nearly 50 percent more than their less-socially connected counterparts.²

Employees' relationships with co-workers



- Employees with colleagues who positively impact their focus/productivity
- Employees with colleagues who positively impacting their stress

² Robinson, Jennifer. "The Business Case for Well-Being Gallup." Gallup Business Journal. June 9, 2010.



TIP 3

Make it clear that socializing is encouraged, so long as it doesn't get in the way of employees' performance. Help your people connect and build friendships by issuing office-wide competitions that encourage teams to come together or promote interdepartmental connections. Challenges can be business-goal related, or something more creative like seeing who can make it to the gym or take the stairs each day.



Can't buy their love

The key to employee happiness? It might not be what many employers think.

Surprisingly it's not money, according to **28 percent of respondents who ranked "maintaining good health, including physical, mental and social," at the No. 1 aspect driving their overall well-being and happiness.** In-line with this finding – and largely unwavering from last year's results – 36 percent of employees said they wish their employer cared more about their emotional health. Nineteen percent want their employers to care about their social well-being.

Finances do play a strong role in what employees are looking for from the organizations where they work, though.

Financial well-being topped the list of factors employees wished their employers cared more about at 40 percent, though, down nearly 5 percent from 2014, it's slightly less important this year. **For 22 percent of employees, financial stability was the key factor impacting their well-being and happiness.** A successful career is also important to many, with 23 percent indicating it as their main well-being and happiness factor.

No. 1 factor impacting employees' well-being and happiness



- Maintaining good health
- A successful career
- Financial stability

TIP 4

Keep in mind that financial well-being and stability doesn't need to directly translate to a fat paycheck. Help employees plan for the future by offering workshops on saving for retirement or college. Support their career goals with a plan for professional development that relates to the path they're already on, or one they're looking to explore.

Conclusion

Show your employees some love and you'll win them over for the long haul. By offering tools, programs and resources that help them make progress on meaningful work, show how they map to the company mission and goals, and connect with the areas of life where they're most looking for your support, you'll help drive their most productive, focused selves at work and beyond.



About Virgin Pulse

Virgin Pulse, part of Sir Richard Branson's famed Virgin Group, helps employers create a workforce with the energy, focus, and drive necessary to fully engage at work and in life. With its award-winning, online platform, the company fosters healthy daily habits and sustainable behavior change that help employees thrive at work and across all aspects of life. Unlike narrowly-focused employee health

and engagement solutions, Virgin Pulse is a hub of consumer-focused strategies and innovative tools that set the foundation for a company's engagement efforts. More than 250 industry leaders representing 1.5M+ employees have selected Virgin Pulse's programs to reinvigorate their workplace.

Learn more at www.virginpulse.com.

