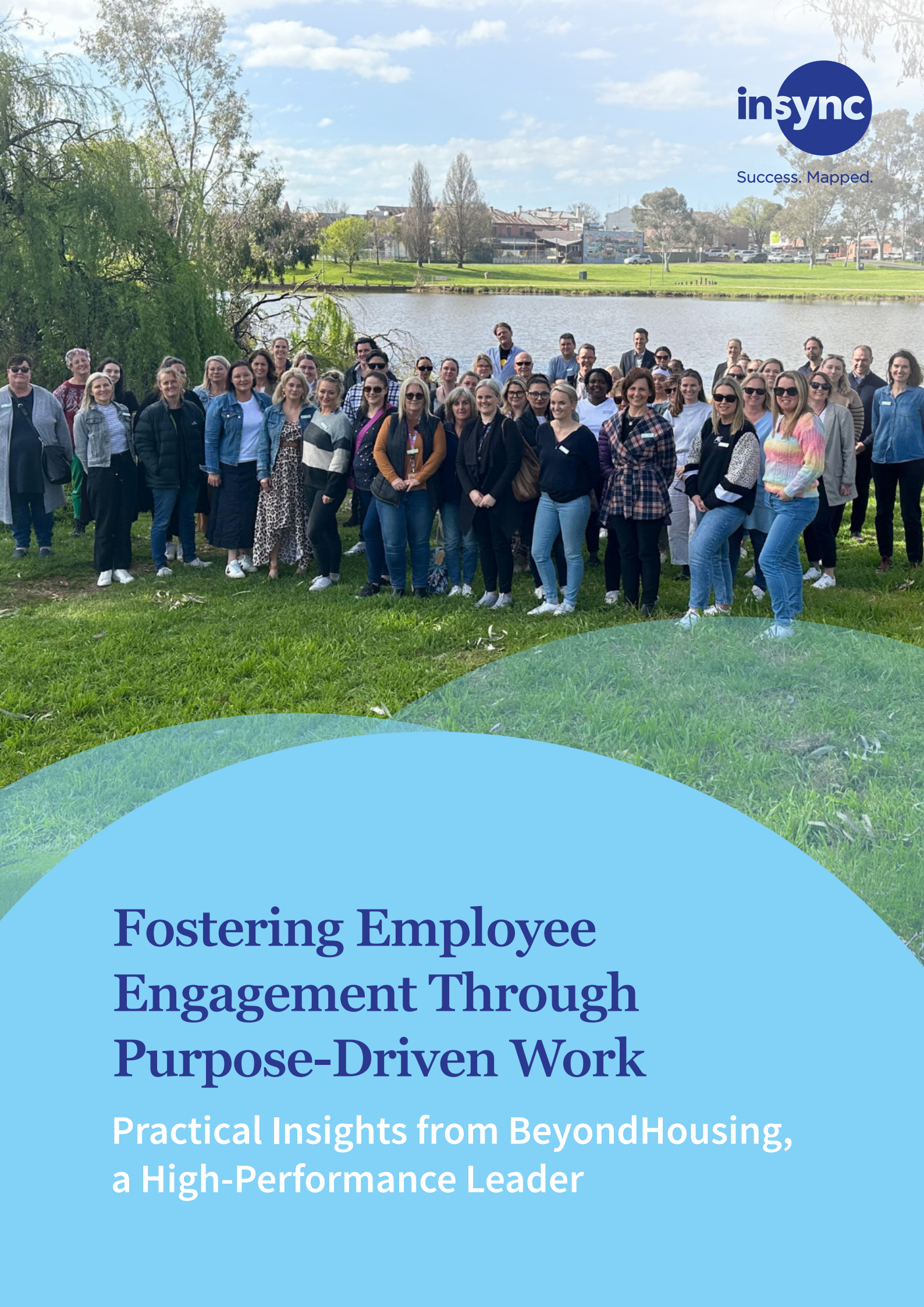




Success. Mapped.



Fostering Employee Engagement Through Purpose-Driven Work

Practical Insights from BeyondHousing,
a High-Performance Leader

BeyondHousing is a not-for-profit organisation providing people with a pathway to home.

As the largest community housing provider within the Goulburn and Ovens Murray regions of Victoria, BeyondHousing oversees 700 properties including long-term community housing and transitional housing. Serving as the main entry point for the homelessness system, BeyondHousing provides a range of supports for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. With a commitment to the prevention and eradication of homelessness, improving addressing housing affordability, and promoting housing stability, the organisation plays a pivotal role in enhancing the lives of those it serves.

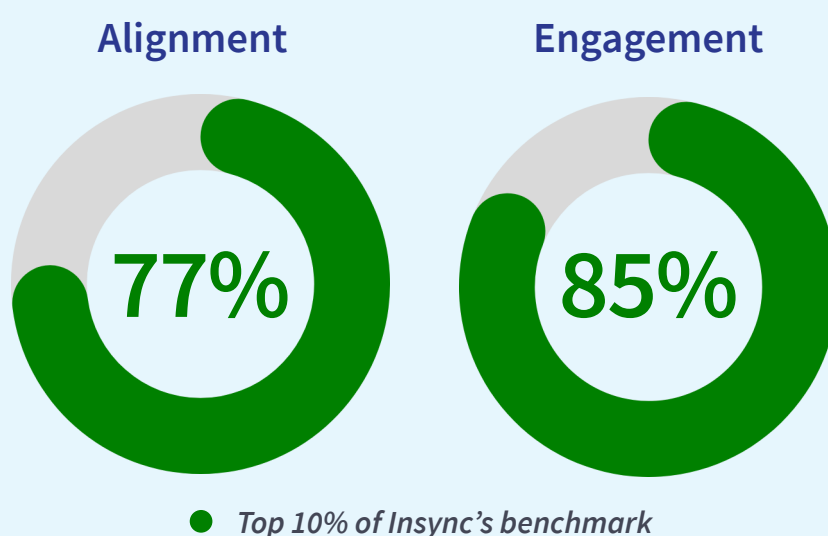


Figure 1

In 2023, BeyondHousing undertook its second 'All Staff' survey, using Insync's Alignment & Engagement survey tool. For the second year in a row, BeyondHousing sits within the top 10 per cent of Insync's not-for-profit benchmark (containing over 350 organisational studies), with an Engagement Score of 85% (+3%) and an Alignment Score of 77% (maintain). (Figure 1)

We sat down with BeyondHousing's Chief Executive Officer, Celia Adams and Chief People Officer, Louise Frichot, to uncover some practical tips to help enhance employee alignment and engagement.



What contributes to the high level of engagement at BeyondHousing?

1. A clear vision and purpose

The vision of BeyondHousing is 'Home. Not Homeless.' Its purpose is 'Ending homelessness'. You can't get much clearer and simpler than that. Right from the get-go, people walk into the organisation and know what they're signing up for.

"We get feedback, particularly from new employees, it's really clear who we are and what we do and therefore what we believe in."

An ongoing focus is how to continually connect employees to the vision and purpose, so that everyone from those working on the frontline to HR to Accounts Payable, knows how they contribute.

2. Successfully linking decisions back to purpose

As a housing organisation, BeyondHousing provides homelessness services, as well as being a housing and support provider. Sometimes, there is tension between these services e.g., being a housing provider (a landlord who at times may need to act against someone, which in a small number of cases, can lead to eviction) versus trying to end homelessness. The ability to manage this tension comes down to how the work is approached. It all comes back to purpose, and how decisions are made to best support both arms of the business; the need to maintain the organisation's assets and provide housing for people (and keep them housed).

"That focus on getting people into housing and then keeping them there is what it is that we do and we're unwavering on that."

3. Remaining niche, targeted and focused

The charity space is flooded with people trying to get your attention. Being very clear about who the organisation is and what it's trying to do, makes it much easier to align and engage with.

"We don't try and be all things to all people."

4. Embedding a values-led culture

With a clear vision and purpose, it makes it easier to attract and recruit staff that align with the values of the organisation. With that comes the intrinsic motivation to work hard to deliver the best for the clients, with a strong sense of pride and commitment to giving back to the community.

**BeyondHousing
employee perceptions
regarding "I am proud to
be working here."**

96%
agree

How do you ensure your vision is embedded within BeyondHousing culture?

1. CEO “new starter” meetings

At BeyondHousing, a crucial part of the employee onboarding process involves a discussion with the CEO. During this interaction, the CEO shares insights into the organisation’s history, vision, purpose, values, and strategy. The CEO also engages in a dialogue with the new employee, exploring what motivated them to join the company, any disparities between their expectations and reality, and aspects that align with their expectations. These orientation meetings typically involve a group of new hires, making for a lively conversation and connecting new team members with each other.

“Capturing those views from people when they’re brand new and shiny and full of motivation and enthusiasm is sometimes the right time to get that feedback before some of the habits form and they’re just doing the doing gets started.”



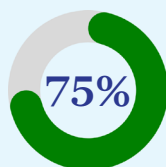
2. Aligning behaviours to organisational values

It’s important that the organisation is authentic and honest to the values and culture that brings people in. For BeyondHousing, this is remaining committed to the clients, that sit at the centre of everything they do, and using available resources to continually put back into the services it provides.

“I think what BeyondHousing does well is it’s not fancy... We have functional and comfortable offices, and our BeyondHousing pool vehicles are modern but basic... And I think what our team see is that all the money we make is going into building new housing and funding homelessness services...”

It’s also been promoting the behaviours that foster a culture that will enable BeyondHousing to thrive. As a team, there is a sense that everyone shows up. Most people have returned to office following the pandemic, so there is a vibe and a connectedness that drives the sense of doing good things together.

“One of the things that I love most when I’m around the offices is hearing the team standing in their pods and getting angry. I think, when you hear it, a team of people getting angry about lack of equity or unfairness and hearing them bounce off each other... That kind of sharing of problems and ideas. I think it’s really important.”



Agree “Our executive team has a vision for BeyondHousing that inspires me.”

How do you ensure your vision is embedded within BeyondHousing culture?

3. All staff meetings

These meetings provide a good opportunity to bring everyone together and focus internally. Discussions focus on vision, purpose, values and ethical decision-making. It's a good opportunity for leadership to connect with employees and demonstrate understanding of the challenges they face.

“There are trade-offs that we must make all the time. We simply don't have enough houses for all the people that need them. How do we decide who gets the house? How do we acknowledge as a leadership team, that these are tough conversations and decisions and that actually someone misses out? How do we empathise with our workforce for the challenging position that they are in making those decisions, whilst also enabling them to have the tools that they need to feel comfortable and confident in their decision making?”

4. Joining the dots between day-to-day tasks and the vision

By mapping out the typical client's journey, from walking into the reception area at BeyondHousing, to ideally being offered a tenancy in a brand-new property, it makes it real, and employees can connect to it. Employees can see where their role fits in and how they make an impact, so no matter what, they can feel a sense of achievement.

5. Remaining light on ego

As an executive team, there is a focus on being “light on ego”. It's recognised that it's important as a group to acknowledge when things go wrong, or when things didn't quite go to plan. This means that as a group, there is a commitment to having open, robust conversations and being comfortable to disagree with each other. These sorts of conversations happen all the time around the executive table, but ultimately, the team is aligned as a group and the best decision and outcome can be reached.

“We are unapologetically and authentically ourselves, and that includes stuffing up.”

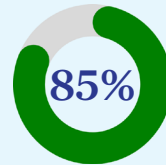


How do you ensure you're recruiting people who align with the vision and culture of BeyondHousing?

Embedded in recruitment practices include assessing:

- Technical skills – can they do their job?
- Values alignment – do their personal values align with the values of BeyondHousing?
- Team fit – are they going to fit in with the team?

It's also considered an important part of the process to reflect on times when recruitment hasn't worked out, and someone, in hindsight, is considered a poor fit for the organisation. A process of reflection, without blame, helps to identify potential blind spots and helps to better recruitment practices in the future.



Agree "I am able to make use of my skills and abilities in my role."

"We know what we're looking for and it's almost like a language and you can hear people who understand it when they talk about stories and people, you will hear it in their language if they're believing it, or whether they're just saying the things that they think you want to hear."

How do you set and maintain such high levels of commitment to performance and accountability?

Several factors contribute to BeyondHousing's high performance:

- Investment in leadership coaching and development
- Creation of BeyondHousing 'leadership principals', which guide expected behaviours
- Setting clear, specific, measurable, and realistic key performance indicators (KPIs), with direct linkages to the day-to-day work of employees
- Creating visibility of how tracking against KPIs (part of current digital transformation project)
- A supervision framework, which gets regularly reviewed
- Expectation of team leaders and managers to be having monthly one-on-one discussions

Another critical piece of ensuring performance standards remain high is a continual focus on managing the delicate balance of showing care for employees while holding people accountable to behaviour and performance expectations. This is a key focus and discussion point for the Executive Team and is a continual work in progress.

"In the not-for-profit space, there is a risk that we run into this ruinous empathy, where our empathy for people, including our teams, sometimes stops us from expecting performance. One of the things that we are doing as leadership and Exec is talking about the two aren't mutually exclusive...We can focus on the human and the performance at the same time."



Agree
"BeyondHousing is committed to high standards of performance"

What sort of employee benefits have you introduced to help enhance workplace culture?

Employee benefits can go a long way to enhancing a sense of care from an organisation and supporting the workplace culture. These sorts of practices can be embedded within employee recognition and well-being programs.

Effective employee benefits successfully implemented by BeyondHousing include:

- Paid time to exercise during work hours
- Reimbursement of up to \$350 for anything to support employee health and wellbeing (e.g., a fitness tracker, an osteo or dental appointment, a gym membership)
- Regular fruit and vegetable boxes, made available in the office

- Team lunches (reimbursed by BeyondHousing)
- Flexible work/hybrid work arrangements
- Purchased leave, where employees can access up to an additional week of annual leave
- Accrued leave, where employees can bank up to five RDOs, to take when they wish

Another recent tweak to policy that has been favourably received, is the loosening of the requirement for a medical certificate for a single, or a couple of, days off. Particularly when operating in regional and remote areas, getting to see a doctor for the purpose of getting a doctor's certificate, can be tough. It also costs money if bulk-billing isn't readily available. This is seen as an important initiative in demonstrating trust in employees.

What does success look like for you next year?

“Success for me will look like that if you were to have this conversation with any two members of our team next year (who weren't Louise and I) that they would be able to tell you the same things that we've told you. The other thing that success looks like is if people reach out and want work with us, because of who we are, what we do and what we stand for. And people see us as an employer of choice. Not because life is easy, but actually cause its bloody hard work.”

Celia Adams
Chief Executive Officer
BeyondHousing

