

Engaging the other half of your workforce

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING PART-TIME EMPLOYEES



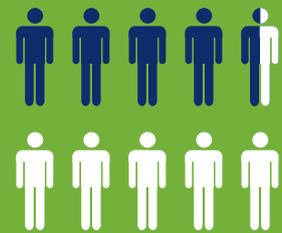
A growing workforce

PART-TIME EMPLOYEES (PT EMPLOYEES) MAKE UP 31% OF THE AUSTRALIAN WORKFORCE. THAT IS 3.9 MILLION PEOPLE OUT OF A TOTAL WORKFORCE OF 12.4 MILLION. PT EMPLOYEES MAKE UP AN EVEN BIGGER PROPORTION (45%) OF THE 1.6 MILLION PEOPLE WORKING IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE. UNDERSTANDING HOW TO BEST ENGAGE AND EQUIP PT EMPLOYEES TO PERFORM IN THEIR ROLES IS THEREFORE CRITICAL FOR THE EFFECTIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THESE SECTORS.

31% of Australia's workforce is part-time



Almost 1 in 2 employees in Health & Social Assistance works part-time



Given its importance, Insync explored the differences in work experiences of part-time and full-time employees (FT employees) by looking into the results from 25 recent employee engagement studies from the Not for Profit (NFP) sector, comprising over 10,000 employees.

We found that the engagement levels of PT employees were lower than FT employees in 18 of the 25 organisations (72%) and equal or higher in seven of the 25 organisations (28%). On average across all 25 organisations, we found a 6% difference between PT and FT employee engagement, 63% and 69% respectively.

This led us to question:

- **What aspects of the part-time work experience are different?**
- **How can NFP organisations engage their PT employees more effectively?**

We found that not only are PT employees less engaged than FT employees, they are less positive about key aspects of the employment experience.

On average PT employees feel less:

- Inspired and connected to the organisation's vision
- Valued by the organisation and by leaders
- Able to develop and use their skills and talents
- Attached to the organisation as a whole

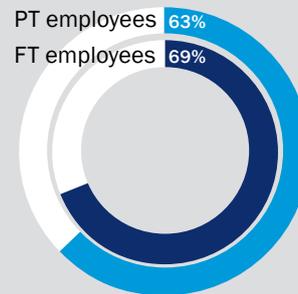
We did, however, find that PT employees are equally satisfied with their remuneration and are more satisfied with their work-life balance.

As previously mentioned, over a quarter of NFPs (28%) are engaging their PT employees as well or better than their FT employees. In the second half of this paper we share the good practices that some NFPs are applying to ensure their PT employees feel valued, inspired, committed and supported to contribute to the organisation's success and have a positive work experience.

Engagement challenges

PT EMPLOYEES ARE LESS ENGAGED

Engagement refers to the degree to which employees feel emotionally connected to the organisation, have a positive attitude about their work and go the extra mile to help the organisation succeed. Insync measures engagement using an index of 10 statements such as *I am proud to work here, I look forward to coming to work and I happily do extra work to help our organisation succeed.*



Employee engagement index

% favourable = proportion of respondents selecting a 6 or 7 on the 7-point scale across 10 engagement statements, averaged across all 25 organisations

PT EMPLOYEES FEEL LESS INSPIRED AND CONNECTED TO THE ORGANISATION'S VISION

Our senior leadership team have a vision for my organisation that inspires me ¹



I understand how my role contributes to my organisation's long term goals and strategies ¹



PT EMPLOYEES FEEL LESS VALUED BY THE ORGANISATION AND BY LEADERS

My organisation cares about and is committed to me ¹



The person I report to values my opinions ²



PT EMPLOYEES FEEL THERE ARE FEWER OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

I have real opportunity to improve my skills, knowledge and expertise in this organisation ²



My skills and talents are used to their full potential ¹



PT EMPLOYEES FEEL LESS CONNECTED TO THE ORGANISATION AS A WHOLE

I am proud to be working here ¹



I would recommend my organisation as a workplace to my friends and families ¹



1. % favourable = proportion of respondents selecting a 6 or 7 on the 7-point scale, averaged across all 25 organisations
 2. % favourable = proportion of respondents selecting a 6 or 7 on the 7-point scale, averaged across 19 organisations

RAMPing up PT engagement

AN EVER-GROWING PROPORTION OF PT WORKERS, PARTICULARLY IN THE NFP INDUSTRY, MAKES IT CRITICAL TO ENSURE THAT PT EMPLOYEES ARE FULLY ENGAGED IN THEIR ROLES AND COMMITTED TO THEIR ORGANISATION'S SUCCESS.

This paper highlights how levels of engagement of PT employees and FT employees differ. We also note the variation in results between organisations, indicating that the ability to engage PT employees is organisation-specific.

Furthermore, it is clear that PT employees are not in any way a homogenous group. Not only are organisations and roles very different, the needs and expectations of PT employees vary widely. Most PT employees choose to work part time due to study, lifestyle preference or raising children, which is supported by the fact that PT employees in these studies were more positive about their work-life balance than FT employees. That being said, their desire for a connection to the organisation they work for and/or challenge from their role may also fluctuate throughout life stages.

It is very important that managers don't treat PT employees as if they have the same needs and expectations. Managers should customise their engagement strategies depending on the needs and expectations of the individual.

For example, a new parent who is also the primary carer might want to reduce the expectations related to a previous full-time role, so they can focus on a demanding home environment. Once the children are older and at school, the PT employee may have much more energy and ambition to take on additional challenges and opportunities at work. Likewise, a highly experienced worker starting to transition to retirement might still want to take on very challenging tasks but might just want more free time to explore other interests.

The engagement strategies outlined below are based on the good practices being applied by leading NFP organisations, supplemented by our research into intrinsic human motivators and the corresponding engagement strategies that can be adopted. While they have been applied specifically to PT employees they will also apply to FT employees to a great extent.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

	Engagement driver...	Recognises the human need...	Therefore managers should...
R	Relationships	...to belong and feel connected	...build rapport and trust
A	Autonomy	...to be in control of our lives	...promote discretion and latitude
M	Mastery	...to learn and create	...provide challenges and opportunities
P	Purpose	...for meaning	...connect people to purpose and strategy

Relationships

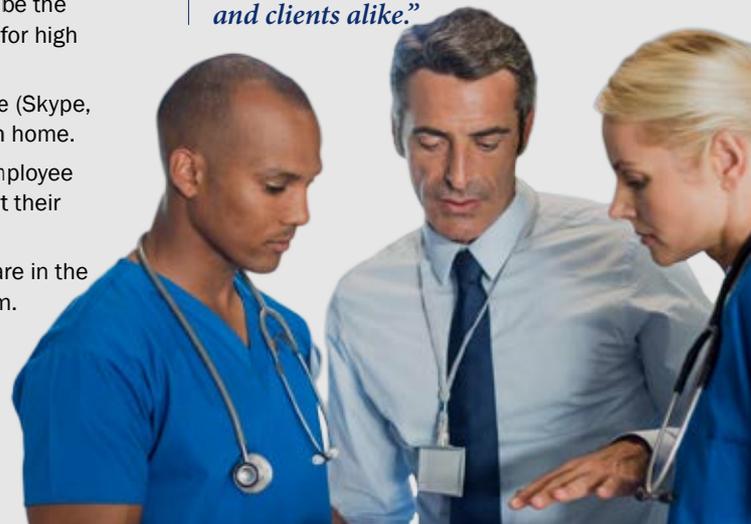
RECOGNISING HOW IMPORTANT IT IS FOR PEOPLE TO BELONG AND TO FEEL CLOSELY CONNECTED TO OTHERS, MANAGERS OF PT EMPLOYEES MUST TAKE THE TIME TO BUILD GENUINE RAPPORT AND TRUST WITH THEM.

Good practices for engaging PT employees include:

- Committing to regular (at least monthly) one-on-one meetings and making sure to follow-through on agreed actions. A strong relationship with one's immediate manager is a critical method for making PT employees feel connected to their teams and the broader organisation.
- Taking time to understand each person as an individual. Understand their personal circumstances, including home environment and interests outside the workplace. Get to know their goals and aspirations, know their strengths and development needs and support them to be the best they can be. A strong relationship provides the platform for high engagement and superior performance.
- Using technology to connect face-to-face as much as possible (Skype, face-time etc.) when they are out of the office or working from home.
- Showing appreciation/acknowledgement specifically of PT employee contribution and achievements and discussing how important their contribution is to achieving the organisation's goals.
- Aiming to have one or two days a week where all employees are in the office to build relationships, camaraderie and a sense of team.

"[The best thing is] having a manager who supports me and understands me - and has taken the time to get to know me and understand how I work."

"[The best thing is] it is like being part of a big family. In times of personal need we support each other. As a team we are well supported by team members and our managers. We are very lucky to have such a supportive environment for workers and clients alike."



Autonomy

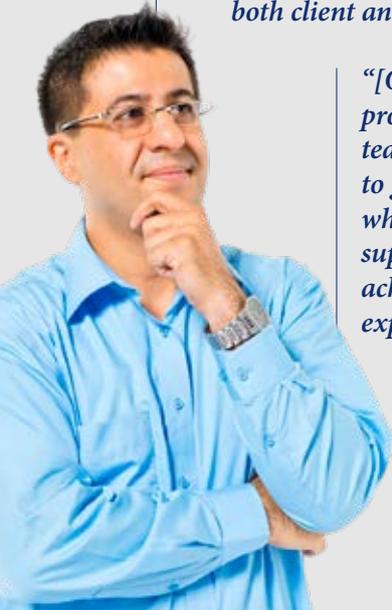
"[The best thing about working for this organisation is] the client focused work, and the flexibility to work in my own way to achieve both client and my own goals."

"[Our organisation] provides me and my team the autonomy to get the job done, whilst providing any support required to achieve and exceed expectations."

RECOGNISING THE MULTIPLE DEMANDS ON PT EMPLOYEES AND THE NEED FOR PEOPLE TO BE IN CONTROL OF THEIR LIVES, MANAGERS MUST GIVE TEAM MEMBERS AS MUCH DISCRETION AND LATITUDE AS POSSIBLE.

Good practices for engaging PT employees include:

- Focusing more on results achieved (rather than activities) by agreeing goals and reviewing outcomes.
- Allowing team members as much discretion as possible in determining how agreed goals will be achieved. Discretion can relate to tasks (what they do), teams (who they work most closely with), time management (how they schedule their time) and techniques used (how they carry out their tasks).
- Ensuring that reward schemes are based on a combination of individual, team and company goals.
- Enable employees to work flexibly and promote the importance of work-life balance in line with the requirement to achieve agreed goals.



Mastery

RECOGNISING THAT PEOPLE HAVE A DEEP DESIRE TO LEARN AND CREATE NEW THINGS, MANAGERS MUST LOOK TO MAXIMISE THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO PT EMPLOYEES.

Good practices for engaging PT employees include:

- Setting challenging role expectations and learning opportunities in collaboration with employees. Review progress during one-on-one meetings and link this to the organisation's goals.
- Giving PT employees the opportunity to grow via challenging projects including inter-department roles. Develop existing skills via secondments, skip-level meetings, rotations in chairing meetings and mentoring. As PT employees are at work less, there is risk they could be overlooked for these opportunities.
- Building a culture of recognition. Personal notes of acknowledgement to employees can be more meaningful than formal rewards; highlight good work to managers two levels up for them to also recognise and thank employees for good work and exceptional results.

"[This organisation] recognises my skills and experience both lived and at work. It has encouraged me to progress within the organisation."

"[The organisation] is setting a fertile ground for me to grow as an individual and continue to strive for the best".



Purpose

RECOGNISING THAT PEOPLE SEEK MEANING IN WHAT THEY DO, AND SEEK TO CONTRIBUTE TO SOMETHING GREATER THAN THEMSELVES, MANAGERS OF PT EMPLOYEES MUST HELP THEM CONNECT WITH THE ORGANISATION'S PURPOSE AND STRATEGY. THEY SHOULD ALSO ENCOURAGE THEM TO BE CLEAR ON THEIR INDIVIDUAL PURPOSE AND HELP THEM TO RECONCILE IT WITH THAT OF THE ORGANISATION.

Good practices for engaging PT employees include:

- Regularly communicating the vision, strategy and goals with team members – in emails, in team meetings, in one-on-ones, in visual material. Use words that resonate.
- Asking team members to consider and describe how their role connects with the organisation and the team's goals – use this as a discussion tool in one-on-one meetings. Follow up in regular reviews.
- Identifying and eliminating any actions/tasks/behaviours that are not aligned with the organisation's goals.
- Make a point of holding important company and team meetings on days when most part-time workers are in the office to help them understand and connect with the organisation's vision and strategy.

"[The best thing is] working with clients who appreciate my service. I like working for an organisation that helps others. I gain satisfaction from improving the lives of other people."

"[The best thing is] it gives me an opportunity in my current role to promote change for the better in people alongside my own beliefs on the best way to practice service delivery."



So what does it all mean?

ALL EMPLOYEES, WHETHER PART-TIME OR FULL-TIME, HAVE THE SAME HUMAN NEEDS AND THE SAME DESIRES TO FEEL CONNECTED, FEEL IN CONTROL, TO LEARN AND CREATE, AND TO FEEL A SENSE OF PURPOSE.

While on average many of the engagement results were lower for PT employees, just over a quarter of the organisations included in the study are doing a good job of engaging their PT employees. This paper has summarised the key differences in results for PT employees and FT employees, and considered a framework for better engaging your workforce, including practical strategies to address the specific engagement gaps of PT employees.

Implementing good practice around these four pillars will hold you in good stead for engaging your workforce as a whole. It is also important to understand and address the particular challenges that exist for individual PT employees. Ensuring that people managers are aware of these challenges, and that they tweak their approach for PT employees accordingly, could in fact be the key to enhancing employee engagement in the other half of your workforce and really driving your organisation towards sustainable high performance.

How Insync helps NFPs

1. Attracting and retaining employees

The ability to attract and retain employees with the required skills and attitudes is fundamental to helping disadvantaged people cope with challenging circumstances.

Insync's entry, exit and value proposition research will help you identify what is important to new employees, understand what causes people to leave your organisation, and determine what can be done to keep the right people for longer.

2. Engaging and aligning employees

While many community services organisations have engaged employees who identify strongly with the cause, there is often less clarity regarding the organisation's specific strategies and goals, and how employees contribute to achieving them. There can also be some uncertainty as to whether the organisation has the resources, processes and systems needed to execute the strategy effectively.

Insync's alignment and engagement framework gives you a thorough diagnosis of your organisation's potential for high performance. It highlights areas of strength and weakness versus similar organisations, and signposts a clear course of action for lifting your organisation's performance.

3. Understanding and meeting the needs of clients

Hearing the voice of clients has numerous benefits to community services organisations:

- Identify how programs can be improved to achieve better client outcomes
- Demonstrate to supporters and funding bodies the results that are being achieved
- Improve quality standards and supporting accreditation by identifying strengths and weaknesses
- Provide confidence to the board that the organisation is achieving its purpose and goals

Insync's research framework typically seeks client feedback on three key dimensions:

1. Experiences and perceptions - what is it like for clients to deal with your organisation?
2. Outcomes and actions - how well are you meeting clients' needs?
3. Strengths and weaknesses - what are you doing well and where do you need to improve?

4. Ensuring sustainability through direction and leadership

There's nothing more important than having an effective and cohesive executive team that displays a real commitment to shaping and influencing the execution of the organisation's strategy. Insync assists with facilitation of vision and strategy workshops, reviews of leadership team effectiveness and 360 degree feedback.

About Insync

**INSYNC HELPS ORGANISATIONS ACHIEVE
SUSTAINABLE HIGH PERFORMANCE BY IMPROVING
EMPLOYEE AND CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT.**

With over 25 years' experience, we're experts in employee engagement surveys, customer research, exit interviews, 360 feedback and leadership team and board evaluations. We also assist clients with focus groups, action planning, change management and developing and reviewing EVPs and CVPs.

We've conducted over 1,000 employee, customer and board research projects in the last five years. We have helped Anglicare, BaptistCare, CatholicCare, Red Cross, Uniting, ACCC, ASX, Cathay Pacific, Chevron, Country Road, CSIRO, Fairfax, GrainCorp, John Holland, Johnson & Johnson, KPMG, Metro, Mitsui, Nufarm, QBE, Salvation Army, Swire, Sydney Water, Toll, Visy, YMCA, federal and state government departments and agencies, many local councils and most universities.

We have delivered surveys, research and consulting projects in around 100 countries and 40 languages. We have made significant investments in our people, processes, culture and technology to ensure that we provide cost-effective and actionable insights to clients that make a real difference to their organisation.

www.insyncsurveys.com.au

Melbourne
Level 7, 91 William Street
Melbourne VIC 3000 Australia
Tel +61 3 9909 9209
Fax +61 3 9614 4460

Sydney
Level 20, 15 Castlereagh Street
Sydney NSW 2000 Australia
Tel +61 2 8081 2000
Fax +61 2 9955 8929

Insync Surveys Pty Ltd ABN 58 108 768 958

insyncTM surveys
research
consulting