

Q10. I have a best friend at work.

Help Me Build Mutual Trust

Throughout our lives, we spend a lot of time at work. Accordingly, we instinctively look to develop friendships at work in which we feel respected and trusted. Going a step further and having a best friend at work can help employees feel more engaged — and with best friends, teams will be more likely to see a positive impact on business results. It's simple: People with friends at work are happier at work.

The *best* predictor of having higher wellbeing and engagement at work is not what people are doing — it's whom they are with.

Without a best friend at work, the chances of being engaged in your job are one in 12.



If you have a best friend at work, you are significantly more likely to:

- engage your customers and internal partners
- get more done in less time
- have fun on the job
- have a safe workplace with fewer accidents or reliability issues
- innovate and share ideas

While we spend the majority of our waking hours at work, only 30% of employees Gallup surveyed report having a best friend at work.

If you are fortunate enough to be in this group, you are **seven times** as likely to be engaged in your job.

Only 20% of employees dedicate time to developing friendships on the job.

The best employers recognize that people want to build meaningful friendships and that company loyalty is built on such relationships.

The best managers encourage friendships in the workplace by creating the conditions under which such friendships and relationships can thrive. As a manager, you should routinely ask yourself:

- ✓ Do my employees trust one another and me?
- ✓ Does my team work well together?
- ✓ How am I building friendships at work?
- ✓ How do I create more opportunities to foster friendships?

Three Characteristics of a Well-Connected Team

- 1 Trust** Confidence in one another's reliability and dependability
- 2 Teamwork** Appreciation of one another's talents and strengths; can tackle challenges together
- 3 Emotional Loyalty** Loyalty to the team is passionate, expressive and deep-seated

Creating an Environment That Promotes Interaction and Develops Relationships

Of the 12 elements, “I have a best friend at work” is the most controversial. At first glance, you may wonder, “Are friendships really necessary at work?” Maybe you’ve heard stories about employees fraternizing too much on the job, or you think close relationships are messy at work. But Gallup’s research shows that having a best friend at work is the best predictor of whether someone is engaged in their job. There is a simple explanation: People want to build bridges, not walls, and they want to trust the people they work with. Ultimately, employees need to know that someone is looking out for them.

Engaging Conversations

Individual and team conversations are opportunities for your employees to think about and discuss topics that affect engagement. Conversations can help identify actions that the team should take to improve engagement and foster a culture of trust. Asking the following questions can help you build connections among your team members:

- When did you have the most fun at work during the past few months?
- How can we make sure that we have more of these moments?
- Do you feel that there are team members whom you can trust and depend on?
- Can you think of a time when you depended on someone else from our team for success?
- How do you help make our work environment positive and productive?
- How do relationships that you have at work help you do your job better?
- What can we do as a team to build stronger friendships at work?

Best Practices

The best managers recognize that friendships at work are beneficial because they help build trust and engagement and have a positive impact on a team’s morale and productivity. Great managers encourage friendships at work by incorporating the following behaviors into their management style and approach:

- Look for opportunities to get the team together for friendship-building events.
- Share stories about yourself, such as when you started working for the company, what you did before that and where you’re from. Sharing a story helps people connect with one another.
- Plan for a time to socialize at work when it won’t disrupt customers. Think about bringing in donuts, spending five minutes during a group meeting to share fun facts, or celebrating birthdays and work anniversaries.
- Look for ways to pair up team members to complete certain tasks. Doing this can create friendships and help accomplish an assignment.
- Check in with your employees on a regular basis to see how team dynamics are working.
- Talk individually with your employees to learn why they joined your company and what keeps them coming back to work every day.
- Create opportunities for individuals who have complementary strengths to work together and focus on a goal.
- As often as you can, make time for employees to take a break together, whether it is an off-site event or informal lunch. If possible, include family members.