



# The Engagement Lab: 30-Day Experiments HR Can Run with Managers

A practical sprint framework for driving real engagement with people managers and their teams

# Your Guides Today



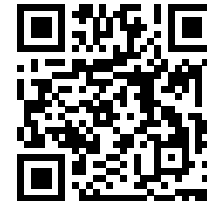
**ALEX GRANDE**  
CEO, Recognize

Alex's expertise spans people strategy and technology, with a particular focus on aligning culture and day-to-day employee experience.



**ELLEN BUTLER**  
Founder, Turning Leaf  
Strategies

Ellen is a certified Employee Experience Designer with real-world experience in employee engagement, manager enablement, and people programs.



# Today's Agenda

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## Why engagement often fails

Engagement programs often rely on surveys that go nowhere or don't have the buy-in and participation needed from company leaders/people managers.

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## Evidence & proof to secure leadership buy-in

How to build a compelling case that executives will take seriously.

**Expectation:** Let's learn how to facilitate a 30-day team engagement pilot that people managers can implement themselves, with structure, clear goals, measurement tips, and proof-points for broader buy-in. We'll share practical examples, tools, and leave time for your questions.

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## Team engagement that runs itself

Enable managers to initiate a simple engagement plan using a practical framework they can put into practice themselves, with minimal support from HR.

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## Live Q&A

Your questions answered by Alex + Ellen

# What is a Sprint?



In the world of software, it's a set period, usually 2 to 4 weeks, during which specific work must be completed and made ready for review.

In Agile, a sprint is...

- **Planning:** The team decides which "User Stories" (employee needs) to tackle.
- **Execution:** The actual building of the solution or initiative.
- **Review:** Demonstrating the work to stakeholders for feedback.
- **Retrospective:** The team looks inward to see how they can work better together in the next round.

**A Sprint = Focus + Time + Action!**



# Small Wins Matter

Even tiny, consistent experiments can build trust, momentum, and proof that employee engagement matters:



## Weekly Huddles

15-minute check-ins that keep goals visible and teams aligned



## Quick Check-Ins

Brief 1-on-1 conversations that surface issues before they grow



## Short Feedback Loops

3-5 question pulse surveys that capture real-time sentiment

# The Promise

Actionable tools you can use with people managers immediately:

## Prototype Small, Fail Fast


Instead of redesigning the entire "Onboarding Experience" for the whole company, run a two-week sprint to fix just the **first 4 hours** for the Sales department.

## High-Frequency Feedback Loops

In a sprint, you don't wait for the annual engagement survey. You test an idea (like a new "Recognition App"), get a small group of users to try it for one sprint, and collect feedback immediately.

## Evidence Leadership Will Take Seriously

A method for capturing results, feedback, and wins that build a compelling business case for ongoing investment.

 **Key Insight:** Even small experiments can demonstrate the value of engaged employees. Today, we'll show you how to use people managers to test different approaches and build a coalition around employee engagement.


# A Comparison: Traditional vs. Agile EX

The shift from traditional HR to agile employee experience design changes how we approach engagement initiatives.

Feature	Traditional HR Approach	Agile EX Design (Sprints)
Goal	Perfection at launch	Continuous improvement
Timeline	6–12 months	2–4 weeks
Feedback	Annual surveys	End-of-sprint reviews
Risk	High (if the big idea fails)	Low (errors are caught early)

# How to Decide What to Plan First

Start by identifying your team's top engagement goals, then evaluate potential initiatives against them to find the best fit.

 **Pro Tip:** Weight your goals against tasks to find out which tasks to do first to hit your list of goals.



# Why Companies Struggle With Experimentation

Managers face four core challenges that impact how they engage their teams:

## Lack of clear frameworks

They're told they're responsible for engaging their team members, but not given the tools

## No bandwidth

Managers are juggling competing priorities that take up most of their time, at the sacrifice of employee-centered activities

## Lack of soft skills

Many managers need to develop skills in relationship building, listening, and coaching

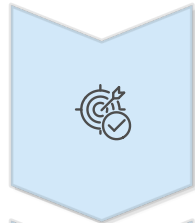
## No visible results

When results can't be quantified or seen immediately, it's hard to justify the time investment

There are many aspects of the employee experience that influence engagement, and people managers don't control all of them. But, even if you focus on only a few engagement practices that managers do own, *you can make an impact.*

# The 30-Day Experiment

A structured, DIY framework for people managers that turns engagement into a natural routine:



## **Week 1: Goal Alignment & Kickoff Huddle**

Define measurable engagement goal and launch with team



## **Week 2: Micro Experiments & Check-Ins**

Run 1-2 small engagement actions and gather feedback



## **Week 3: Mid-Sprint Feedback Loop**

Review progress, adjust experiments, celebrate wins



## **Week 4: Wrap-Up & Evidence Pack**

Review and assess results with your HR partner and iterate or present to leadership

**Key Principle:** Start small, measure everything, and use results to build momentum for the next sprint or next set of managers.

# Adapting for Different Teams

## Frontline Teams

- Use shift huddles instead of scheduled meetings
- Keep experiments visible: boards, posters, daily stand-ups
- Mobile-first pulse prompts and forms (text/SMS friendly)
- Celebrate wins in real-time on the floor or in the field

## Corporate Teams

- Leverage existing team meetings/1:1s for check-ins
- Digital-first: Slack, Teams, email for updates
- Async feedback collection works well
- Tie experiments to project milestones

The framework stays the same, only the delivery methods change based on how teams naturally communicate.

# Goal Alignment & Kickoff Huddle

The first week establishes the foundation and engages the manager and their team in the "experiment."

## Identify a Measurable Engagement Goal


Manager identifies one specific, observable outcome they want to improve: team communication frequency, feedback quality, recognition consistency, cross-functional collaboration, or proactive employee input.

## Co-Design with the Team

Share the goal, explain the 30-day experiment, and invite team input on what micro-actions might move the needle. Frame it as creating greater connection and collaboration for the team.

## Assign Responsibilities

Identify who will track progress, gather feedback, and communicate updates. Keep roles simple and rotate them if possible.

 **Example Goal:** "Increase peer-to-peer recognition from 2 instances per week to 5 instances per week by end of sprint."

# Micro Experiments & Check-Ins

Week two is about action and rapid learning:

## Run 1-2 Small Engagement Actions

Examples of micro experiments:

- **Peer Recognition:** Start a Slack/Teams channel where managers and their team members "shout out" colleagues
- **Quick Feedback Loops:** Add a "wins and blockers" segment to existing meetings and invite input and discussion.
- **Visible Progress:** Create a shared board showing sprint goal and current status
- **Connection Moments:** Schedule 15-minute virtual coffee chats between team members

**Critical:** Keep experiments small enough that failure doesn't matter. The goal is learning, not perfection.

## Gather Feedback

Use a short pulse form (3-5 questions) to capture reactions to the experiment:

- What's working?
- What's not working?
- What should we try next?

# Mid-Sprint Feedback Loop

The halfway point is where you course-correct and build momentum:

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## Review Progress and Pulse Data

Look at your measurable goal: are you moving in the right direction? What does the feedback tell you?

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## Adjust Experiments as Needed


Double down on what's working, kill what's not. This is the chance to pivot without waiting for the sprint to end.

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## Celebrate Small Wins

Public acknowledgment of progress matters. Share wins in team meetings, chat channels, or brief email updates.

 **Why Small Wins Matter:** They build credibility for engagement initiatives and demonstrate that incremental change is possible, without expansive programs.

# Wrap-Up & Evidence Pack

After the final week, work with participating managers to transform learning into institutional knowledge:

## Compile Results, Feedback, and Wins

Document your starting point, what you tried, what you learned, and your end-of-sprint results. Include quotes from team members.

## Decide What to Scale or Adjust

Identify the practices worth continuing, refining, or expanding so the sprint becomes a repeatable habit rather than a one-time effort.

## Close the Loop with the Team

Share what worked, what didn't, and what you'll try next. Transparency builds trust and keeps momentum going.

## Present Outcomes to Leadership

Create a concise wrap-up slide deck showing the experiment, results, and business impact. Use this to secure support for broader involvement and budget.

# Wins That Convince Leadership

## Evidence-Based Examples:

### Measurable Behavior Changes

Show concrete numbers: recognition instances increased from 8 to 23 per month; suggestion box submissions increased from 1 to 6 per month.

### Unsolicited Positive Feedback

Direct quotes from team members about impact matter more than survey scores. Real voices carry weight.

### Voluntary Participation Rates

When 80% of the team actively participates in something optional, it signals genuine engagement rather than compliance.

### Operational Improvements

Tie engagement experiments to business metrics: faster onboarding, reduced errors, improved collaboration across functions.

# The Simple 30-Day Engagement Sprint Template

Everything you need to run your first sprint, complete with goals, huddles, experiments, and wrap-up!



## 30-Day Engagement Sprint Planner

### Sprint Goal

Our engagement goal for the next 30 days:

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Success Metrics: \_\_\_\_\_

### Week 1: Kickoff & Align

- Set goal & roles
- Kickoff huddle notes: \_\_\_\_\_

### Week 2: Experiments & Check-Ins

- Small engagement actions
- Feedback to track: \_\_\_\_\_

### Week 3: Mid-Sprint Review

- Review progress
- Adjust as needed: \_\_\_\_\_

### Week 4: Wrap-Up & Reflect

- Results & wins
- Key takeaways: \_\_\_\_\_

### Evidence & Insights

- What worked: \_\_\_\_\_
- What we learned: \_\_\_\_\_

### Notes:

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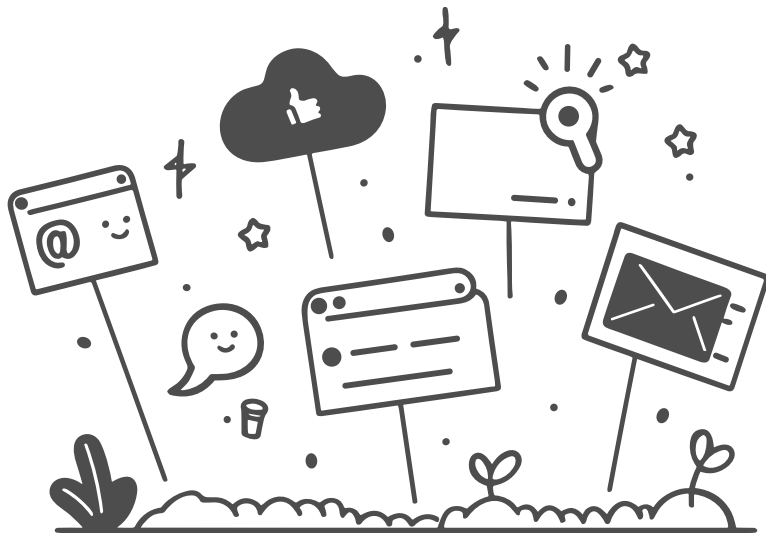
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# What's Next?



## Follow Recognize on LinkedIn

Stay connected for ongoing insights on manager effectiveness and employee engagement:



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/recognizeapp-com>

## Next Webinar:

**Frontline Energy, Not Burnout - Recognition Playbooks for Manufacturing Teams - The Engagement Lab - Part 4**

**Thursday, March 5 - 1 PM ET/10 AM PT**

## Register here:

[https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/4517695382208/WN\\_ubw\\_fynLSIW1v8JZH\\_OSXQ#/registration](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/4517695382208/WN_ubw_fynLSIW1v8JZH_OSXQ#/registration)

## Connect with us:

- Alex Grande: [linkedin.com/in/alexgrande](https://www.linkedin.com/in/alexgrande)
- Ellen Butler: [linkedin.com/in/ellenmbutler](https://www.linkedin.com/in/ellenmbutler) and <https://www.turningleaf.co>

Share your sprint results and tag us! We'd love to hear what works!

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